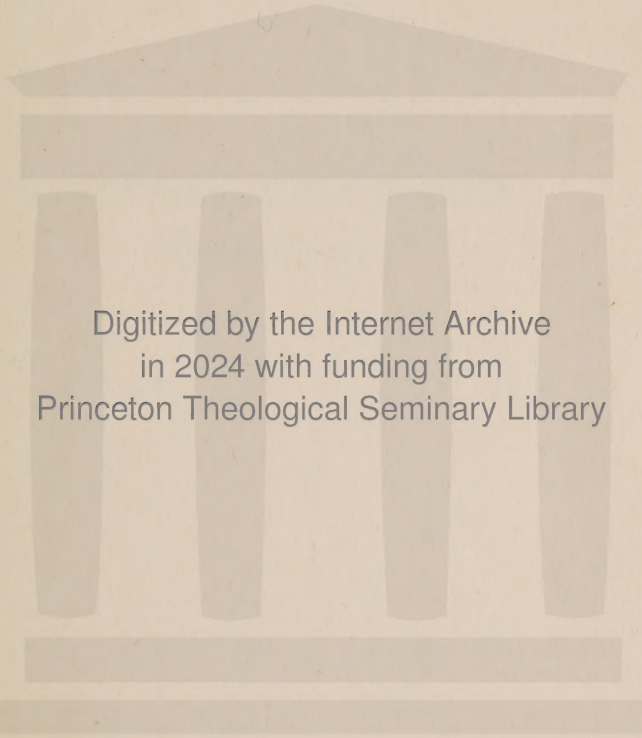


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Frederick Bohn Fisher



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FREDERICK BOHN FISHER

World Citizen



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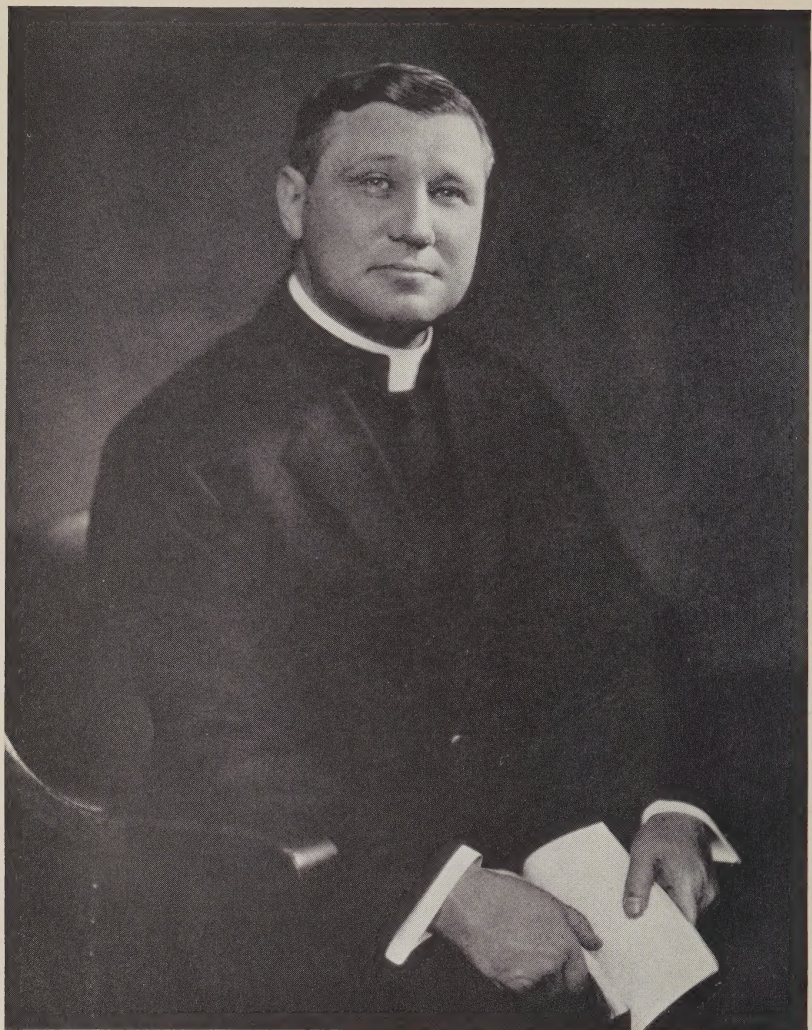
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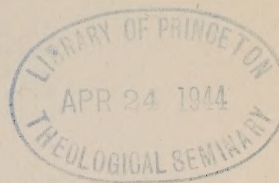


Underwood and Underwood

Frederick Bohn Fisher

Frederick Bohn Fisher

World Citizen



BY

WELTHY HONSINGER FISHER



New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1944

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FOREWORD

The first time I heard of Frederick Bohn Fisher was shortly after he returned from his first service as a missionary in India. I heard a story about him which I have always thought of as being so entirely characteristic as to reveal something of the secret of his success in the mission field and elsewhere. It appears that shortly after "Fred" arrived in India as a missionary he was approached by a couple who asked him to perform the marriage ceremony for them, a request which the new arrival promptly granted. As soon as the word about the marriage got out, all the missionaries of the post were thrown into a hubbub. It seems that at that time American missionaries had no right to perform ceremonies in India or if they had, they were compelled to meet certain legal requirements of a very exacting nature. Of course, the missionaries gave their imaginations loose rein as to the possible dangers, and saw their work hindered and embarrassed by what they called Brother Fisher's rashness.

Brother Fisher gathered together all the rupees that he could find and telegraphed a statement of the case to Lord Curzon, then Viceroy. It was an extraordinary procedure to carry a question of this kind over the heads of all India officialdom up to the Viceroy. The missionaries were almost as excited when they heard about the telegram as they had been over the breach of the marriage regulation. In a few days, however, a friendly and cordial reply came to the effect that the Viceroy knew from his wife, whom he had married in America, that the regulations in the United States were so different that Mr. Fisher's mistake was an altogether natural

one. Furthermore, there came an order that hereafter the embarrassing regulation would be done away with, and the missionaries granted the largest freedom in such affairs.

This incident is illuminating. It shows Fisher's impetuous zeal and also his ability to get out of trouble by pushing clear across a difficulty with a bold stride which defied all precedents. Fred Fisher was one of the most dynamic forces the Methodist Church has ever had. It would not be exact to say that he usually acted upon impulse, but it is just to declare that his reactions were instantaneous, especially in confronting new situations, and that they were likely to be wiser than anything that could be brought forth through long and careful reflection. He was essentially a pioneer and fulfilled remarkably the spirit of the remark of Davy Crockett, one of the greatest of American frontiersmen, "When in doubt, go ahead." Fisher solved his problems by pushing on through them, probably upsetting a good many things as he rushed along, but breaking a new path and arriving at the right place. His vitality was simply enormous and could not be confined to conventional limits.

I would not have anyone think, however, that his strength was in rushing about. He was an earnest and thorough student. I have known him to travel about on long tours with a suitcase full of books heavy both in their actual weight and in their intellectual content. He had an instinct for the larger trends in world movements and knew where to find the best material bearing upon them. His own plans took a wide range as when in his desire to arrange a missionary mass meeting in New York he sought to secure as the chief speaker Sun Yat Sen. If it had been possible for Sun Yat Sen to leave China at the time, Fisher would have brought him here, regardless of expense. Another time he sent an urgent message by wireless from America to Gandhi, a proceeding which made an astonishing impression upon the mind of the pain-

fully economical Mahatma. Paraphrasing a famous general's description of strategy, Fisher's aim in all his policies was to get there first with the most ideas. He was naturally impatient of obstacles that stood in his way. This again was a sign not of arbitrariness but of clear realization of what serious crises called for.

Fred Fisher was a great "campaigner" as the Methodists say—a master of appeal for funds for benevolent causes. He spoke out of intimate personal familiarity with the mission fields,—and his travels were world-wide with his observation reënforced by wide reading—with a sense for the human values involved in every situation—with a dramatic power which at times could be fairly called tremendous.

It was inevitable that a man as vital as he was would be charged with mistakes of judgment and inconsistencies in policies. Some thought he went too far, for example, in advocacy of the cause of India as against Great Britain, but C. F. Andrews, one of the greatest missionaries England ever sent to India, did not think so. Some thought his resignation from the Episcopacy was a mistake, but that was only a minor incident. Any official group is like a fleet of ships. As long as the fleet stays together the speed is set by the slowest boat. Fred could not endure it to have his speed cut down. He could not work best on other men's plans. He could not help being himself—and since there was no other self like him, it was well that it was so. The errors, whatever they were, came of his being more than a living soul, even a quickening spirit—and were more productive of good than were the technically correct decisions of more pedestrian minds.

This book brings back to us the qualities which made Fred Fisher what he was. Mrs. Fisher writes with abundant enthusiasm and affection for her husband. It is only in such a spirit that one can be made to realize the force and vigor of

this dynamic soul. In reading the pages of this book we not only see the face of our departed friend, but we catch anew the glow and tingle of the man himself.

FRANCIS J. McCONNELL

FREDERICK BOHN FISHER

1882-1938

1882 Born, February 14, at Greencastle, Pennsylvania.

EDUCATION

1899 Graduated from High School, Muncie, Indiana.
1902 B.A., Asbury College, Wilmore, Kentucky.
1907-09 Graduate Work, Boston University and Harvard.
1909 S.T.B., Boston University School of Theology.
1930 S.T.D., Boston University.

ORDINATION

1900 Exhorter's License, High Street Church, Muncie, Indiana.
1902 Local Preacher's License, North Indiana Conference.
1904 Deacon's Orders, Bishop C. C. McCabe, Muncie, Indiana.
1905 Elder's Orders, Bishop F. W. Warne, Meerut, India.
1920 Consecrated Bishop, Des Moines, Iowa.

CAREER

1902-04 Beamer Chapel and Hopewell, Kokomo, Indiana.
1904-06 English Church and missionary work, Agra, India.
1906-07 Methodist Church, North Cohasset, Massachusetts.
1907-10 First Methodist Church, Boston, Massachusetts.
1910 World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland.
1910-12 Field Secretary, Board of Foreign Missions.
1912-16 Secretary, Laymen's Missionary Movement of Methodist Church.
1916-17 Associate General Secretary Laymen's Missionary Movement of United States and Canada (Interdenominational).

FREDERICK BOHN FISHER

- 1917-18 Secretary India Mass Movement Commission.
1917-18 Tour of Oriental Mission Fields.
1918-20 Associate Secretary, Board of Foreign Missions.
1918-20 Secretary, Campaign Committee of Joint Centenary Committee.
1918-20 Executive Secretary, New York Area Centenary Committee.
1919-20 Director, Industrial Relations Department Interchurch World Movement.
1920 Elected bishop, Methodist Episcopal Church.
1920-30 Resident Bishop, Calcutta Area.
1927 Member World Faith and Order Conference Lausanne, Switzerland.
1930 Resigned Bishopric, Boston, Massachusetts.
1930-34 First Methodist Church, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
1933-36 President, Free Church Fellowship.
1933-38 President, Theta Phi.
1934-38 Central Methodist Church, Detroit, Michigan.
1938 Died Good Friday, April 15, Detroit, Michigan.

HONORARY DEGREES

- 1915 D.D., Asbury College
1920 D.D., De Pauw University
1921 Fellow, Royal Geographical Society, London, England.
1924 LL.D., Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut.
1932 L.H.D., Hillside College, Hillsdale, Michigan.
1938 Litt. D., Florida Southern College, Lakeland, Florida.

Books

- 1915 The Way to Win, Methodist Book Concern.
1916 Gifts From The Desert, Methodist Book Concern.
1919 Garments of Power, Methodist Book Concern.
1919 India's Silent Revolution (with Gertrude Williams), The Macmillan Company.

FREDERICK BOHN FISHER

- 1923 Which Road Shall We Take? Methodist Book Concern.
1930 Personology (Art of Creative Living), Abingdon Press.
1930 Building the Indian Church (with Walter B. Foley), Albin Press, Calcutta, India.
1932 That Strange Little Brown Man Gandhi (with Grace Nies Fletcher), Long & Smith Co., New York.
1934 Can I Know God? Harper & Brothers.
1937 The Man That Changed The World (Cole Lectures at Vanderbilt University), Cokesbury Press.
1938 How To Get Married and Stay That Way (Evening Sermons To Young People), Rayart Press, Detroit, Michigan.

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FREDERICK BOHN FISHER

World Citizen

CHAPTER I

LIFE'S PATTERN IS CUT

In all the press of his activities as leader of mass movements in the Methodist church, as missionary and bishop in India, as a dynamic spiritual power in his own country, Frederick Bohn Fisher looked forward to the day when he should have the leisure to write a novel. Like most first novels, it would have been largely autobiographical, and he planned to call it "Peter Middletown." The name shows Fred's shrewd awareness of the roots of his power.

Fred Fisher spent the formative years of his boyhood in Muncie, Indiana. This was the place chosen by Robert and Helen Lynd as a typical American city for their survey of small-town life. They put it under their sociological microscope and called it "Middletown." As a background for the modern industrial city, they recreated the isolated middle western county seat of the nineties, the village of Fred's boyhood.

Middle of the Road

It was what the Lynds term the "middle-of-the-road quality" of Muncie which was also characteristic of Fred. Like Muncie, he was essentially American. He shared our typical likes and dislikes, ideals, ambitions and antipathies. He was all this and something more. He had the genius's capacity for hard work. And he had the almost clairvoyant sensitiveness of the born leader to new trends, to barely discernible influences. It was this combination of qualities which gave him his power as a leader of men: the common touch, the tireless industry, the magical prescience of things to come.

The supreme power which presides over infant destinies gave Fred Fisher another lucky break. It gave him perfect timing for his career. It brought him to the threshold of young manhood at the precise moment when our young pioneer country stumbled into a permanent part in global politics. Citizen of the world and religious teacher, Fred Fisher helped with the early thinking which prepared the way for the passionate concern over concerted post-war planning and an international world order that characterizes the 1940's.

Two world wars have overshadowed the memory of our adventures in Cuba and the Philippines. But the May morning when Admiral Dewey led the American Navy into Manila Harbor, he helped set in motion machinery which was to alter the American scene. He hastened the day when the United States would have to surrender cherished traditions of isolation and shoulder its heavy responsibilities as a major world power.

Our reluctance to face this nation's inevitable participation in World War II suggests how incredible must have been the shock of that earlier call for an overseas army to fight our country's battles in some islands on the other side of the world. Not one person in 100,000 in those gay nineties had ever heard of a place called the Philippines. Fred Fisher, an unsophisticated lad of sixteen, deep in the heart of provincial America, responded with instant sensitiveness to that early summons. It was an appropriate beginning of his lifelong service as a loyal American citizen of the world.

Muncie to Manila

Just turned sixteen, Fred was too young to be accepted for the army, but his older brother, Charles, a heroic figure in his blue uniform and brass buttons, had marched aboard the troop train to the blare of the high school band, and suddenly Fred's horizon expanded with great force. Summer

nights Fred and his friends revelled in adolescent nostalgia as they sang a popular new song about the old Moulmein pagoda looking eastward to the sea. For the first time our middle west savored the exotic fascination of the orient.

Fred did more than sing. He applied himself to learning about the distant land that had swallowed up Charles and others of his friends. He read about the Philippines in the Encyclopedia, borrowed a new book by Jacob Gould Schurman, ran down an article in a recent *Century Magazine*. He learned the names and habits of the various tribes: Moros, Igorots, Tagalogs; informed himself about the leading industries: sugar, rice and hemp. In his enthusiastic pursuit of the Philippines, Fred made his first contact with India. He discovered that syllabic writing, invented in India during the reign of the Emperor Asoka in the second century B. C., had reached the Philippines a few years later by way of Sumatra, and he read all he could find about the Indian culture which had flourished on the island of Sumatra until the twelfth century. It centered round the capital city of Sri-Vishaya, so that to this day, the people of the central Philippines are called Visayans after that ancient capital. Soon, spurred on by his interest, the high school was vehemently debating the question, "Shall the United States annex the Philippine Islands?" Such questions were a radical departure for isolationist Muncie, which had previously concentrated its interest within a self-contained little circle.

In 1886 Muncie struck natural gas. Overnight the placid county-seat of six thousand began its transformation into a small manufacturing city. When Fred's family arrived in the early nineties the town had doubled its population. A variety of industries—glass works, iron mills, bridge foundries, nail factories, boot and shoe factories—had been attracted by the cheap new fuel. The gas burned out in the mid nineties, but by that time, the town had grown to twenty thousand and

had built for itself a substantial foundation as a minor manufacturing center. The White River running through the town had not yet been polluted by the chemicals and sewage of the modern industrial city. Its wooded banks provided a convenient center for swimming, fishing and picnics.

Like most of their neighbors, the Fishers' home was set in a lot large enough to provide ample flower and vegetable gardens. Few Muncie streets at that time had water mains, few houses had running water. Fred and his brothers grew up to a simple routine of home chores, splitting wood for the kitchen stove, weeding the garden, pumping water from the well, and carrying it into the kitchen with warnings from mother not to slop it on the clean floor.

Saturday night for our younger generation usually means a trip to the movies or the roller skating rink. In Muncie of the nineties Saturday night was bath night. For a family of four boys that meant lugging the heavy wooden washtub into the kitchen and heating a succession of boilers full of water on the kitchen stove.

Luther and Rousseau

A dominating influence in Fred's early life was his father's small library. There were not many books, only a couple of hundred, but they were well selected. Martin Luther, Emerson, Carlyle, Thoreau, Rousseau, Dickens, Shakespeare—they covered a broad range. At twelve years of age Fred was burrowing his way through them from cover to cover. He began, at his father's suggestion, with a ten-volume history of the Reformation and Martin Luther. Fred had the books in his library at Hingham. One day, he showed them to me. They were an old edition, the pages brittle, the print fine and hard to read. The volumes had been rebound; they were sewed tightly together and were hard to hold.

Leafing through them, Fred read aloud the chapter headings—theological dogmas which furnished the basis for violent controversy and the cruel persecutions of the great leaders of the Reformation. Fred, musing over the yellow pages, was moved to wonder at the consuming interest with which he had followed through volume after volume of this old history. There was something wistful in the mature man's greeting across the years to the small boy with life all before him, so eagerly exploring the field which was to constitute the background of his life's work.

Fred remembered that before he had finished the ten volumes about Luther, his father handed him the life of Jean Jacques Rousseau. A strange combination, the stern reformer and the gay, daring exponent of *laissez-faire*. Fred understood them both, and in later years, the two philosophies were often to compete for domination of the mature man. Fred revelled in the daring of Rousseau who took pride in defiance of conventions and in doing the unexpected. On the other hand, Fred shared the immovable fixity of the monk who, having determined that a thing was right, could not be shaken in his decision. This was Fred also.

He laughed as he remembered his boyish impressions, "The hard right and the easy wrong were balanced before me. Easy Rousseau was so much in my mind that when I came to the page in Luther's life where he threw the inkwell at the devil, I thought he was aiming at Rousseau."

In fact Fred was such a book worm that his parents tried to push him out and entice him into taking more interest in people of his own age. His father accused him of laziness and was constantly calling him to put up his book and go out to shovel snow, or mow the grass. Though Fred laughed about it, the charge must have rankled for he earnestly told me that the neighbors considered that, of the four boys of the family, he himself probably did sixty per cent of the work.

Fred was probably right. He was too vigorous ever to have known laziness. Life fascinated him, and always he pursued the sequence of the days with the unflagging interest and enthusiasm of a great adventure.

A chance memory of small-boy days curiously illustrates his early sense of his own zest for life. It was Christmas afternoon and the Fisher boys were sorting out their presents, dickering and swapping until they were appropriately redistributed.

Howard, a younger brother had been given a Jack-in-the-box. Fred was fascinated when he discovered that by touching a spring on this innocent-looking box, the lid would fly off and Jack jump out at him, magnificent in the tinsel and brocade of a king's lackey.

"That thing should belong to me," Fred told his brother. "It's a mistake for you to have that. I am a Jack-in-the-box, and I've been trying to keep the lid on myself all the time. Only someone is always coming along and touching the spring, and I'm out of the box."

"I persuaded Howard," Fred continued, "to trade it for something of mine that he wanted, and I owned Jack. And do you know what I wanted to do with him? Somehow I identified myself with Jack. I couldn't bear to think of him shut up in that box. I kept the lid open and let the little man stay out of the box all the time. I seemed to rebel instinctively against repressions and inhibitions—even for a Jack-in-the-box."

Mrs. Fisher was the dominating influence in the family councils. Hers was the stronger nature, the keener insight. She had early recognized that of her four boys Fred was the one who would make his mark. She was always inviting young people to the house, getting up birthday parties and picnic parties on the banks of the White River, any excuse for pushing Fred out into contact with boys and girls of his

own age. All down the years there was a very tender bond of special understanding and affection between Fred and his mother.

In a day of limited interests, unobstructed by radio, movies, comic strips, religion constituted, for every family, for every individual, a major issue. They discussed solemn generalities with artless seriousness—Free Will, Good and Evil, Is Satan a real person? They had "Evenings with the Poets," and "Chautauqua Circles," which year by year followed the heavy round of lectures and reading laid down by that institution.

For a young boy religion was primarily a long list of Things Not to Do. He might not play games on Sunday, nor make candy, nor read newspapers, nor story books. On the positive side, he might memorize Bible verses, read his well-thumbed Sunday school cards and go to church three or four times, beginning with Sunday school and continuing on through morning service, young people's meeting and evening service. In a reminiscent mood not long before the end of his life, Fred one day said, "There has never been a time when I have been free from what might be called a search for God. There have always been doubts about the nature of God, but there has never been any period in my life when that search has not been ultimate in every dream and purpose and action."

His First Hero

Fred's natural religious bent was sharply accented under the influence of a Methodist minister who came to Muncie when he was fourteen, just as he was entering high school. Always a hero worshipper, Fred had already given his boyish devotion to Phillips Brooks. He had never seen Mr. Brooks, but he had heard a college president lecture about him, and he remembered that lecture all his life. The new

minister at High Street Church, the Rev. Leslie F. Naftzger, attracted Fred's attention at once by his resemblance to Phillips Brooks. He was a short, heavy-set man, stockily built. Perhaps Fred who, both as boy and man, was of a short and stocky build was identifying himself with successful men of his type by way of compensation.

Fortunately for Fred, this latest hero, the new pastor, reciprocated his interest and recognized in the boy the promise of future achievement. Throughout his high school period, Dr. Naftzger was his warm personal friend, and Fred was soon made to feel at home in the parsonage. The Doctor had a schedule of days when he made parish calls and days when he worked on next Sunday's sermon. On the latter days, Fred, school books under his arm, would quietly walk into the pastor's study and, without speaking, seat himself at a little table in the corner. From time to time, the pastor would look up and read Fred a passage from his sermon, or pause for a brief discussion.

Fred recalled with tender affection the indelible impression that this gift of mature, understanding friendship had made upon him as an eager boy. He remembered in detail some of Dr. Naftzger's sermons, one especially on the perfect nature of God which seemed to have come as a special answer to questions which had preyed upon him.

Partly because of Dr. Naftzger's friendship, partly because Fred, even as a boy, had won for himself the confidence and affection of his older neighbors, he was admitted to an adult bible class which met on Sunday mornings before church. They were a small group, who, in the intimacy of congenial comradeship often passed from discussion of spiritual principles to their application to concrete personal problems. "Frequently in those Sunday morning meetings," said Fred, "there would be an exact statement of the amount of money someone had to meet certain pressing debts, and

discussion of which debts should have right of way. Or a mother would tell quite frankly of her difficulties with a son or daughter. Or a wife would describe the issues between herself and her husband's mother. The whole group entered into the discussion of these problems with simple sincerity, and then they would pray for the person in trouble. Never once can I recall hearing any of the difficulties presented to our group becoming the subject of general gossip in the town. We all felt the obligation of a privileged confidence. This spiritual comradeship made a great impression upon me. It has always remained with me as an ideal, made possible by the personal influence and leadership of the pastor. And I was proud of the fact that I was the only young person admitted to the group."

It was a simple, devout atmosphere in which Fred grew up, but it also furnished the background out of which at that very time small town business men of the nineties were laying the foundations for some of the mass-production fortunes of today. In Muncie itself the Ball family were building up the factories and the management which were to make the Mason jar, for canning and preserving, a household word throughout the nation.

Fred was an ambitious, alert boy, the only member of his family to work his way through college. But his day dreams were never of buying and selling, of amassing a fortune. Nor did he dream of girls and romance. He was ambitious, but his ambition was concerned with achieving virtue and conquering temptation.

About this time he read Franklin's autobiography and, always alert for new ideas, he seized upon Franklin's habit of keeping notebooks for setting down in black and white virtues to be practiced, vices to be avoided. Fred kept such notebooks all his life and they constitute a moving record of a good man's constant effort to walk with God. As a boy he

took over Franklin's elaborate scheme of character book-keeping. Fred prepared a notebook, modelled on Franklin's, a page for each day of the year, with columns in which to check virtues and vices. "In a childish way," said Fred, "I tried to work out a scientific technique for meeting temptation, a practical aid to approaching the life of the perfect man. Needless to say, I failed then as I fail now in my search for perfection. I soon became disgusted with the elaborate machinery of the notebook and gave it up with a sense of discouragement."

A Religious Experience

As a man, Fred triumphantly achieved a wholesome out-giving Christian faith. Looking back, he was puzzled by his excessive brooding and day-dreaming over spiritual problems. Those hours in Dr. Naftzger's study stood out as the high lights of his boyhood. It was his first mature friendship and he said that it rather spoiled him for the society of boys and girls of his own age. They seemed immature and frivolous by comparison. He remembered making his excuses and slipping away from parties early to find solitude in which to mull over the obsessing theme of how best a man might approach the perfection of God. "It was," commented Fred, "almost morbid the way this idea laid hold of my adolescent mind."

It was part of the culture of his time and group to make of conversion an extremely emotional experience. Fred, for all his deep concern over spiritual perfection, always maintained a practical and balanced realism towards life's problems. He could not be unaware of the tacit expectation of his spiritual sponsor, Dr. Naftzger, and indeed of the entire community that he should submit himself to a public conversion. Fred was too honest to be able to hypnotize himself into putting on an act because it was expected of him. His own account

of his conversion has deep psychological interest as a record of the struggle between conflicting forces in a well-balanced nature.

A revival meeting was held in the midst of a February blizzard, Dr. Naftzger serving as his own evangelist. The youth of Muncie turned out *en masse*, fighting their way to the church through snow storms and over icy streets. After delivering a rousing sermon, Dr. Naftzger would appeal to all those who sought a higher life to come forward and kneel at the chancel rail. The Doctor, flanked by his elders, would kneel behind the rail and wait for candidates. Fred attended the meetings regularly night after night. He was too vitally concerned to stay away. But, night after night, he could not bring himself to go forward to the altar. In describing the experience to me, Fred said, "I was seeking the victory in a subjective way, and my whole soul rebelled against this parade of one's most intimate life in public. It was repulsive to me to watch my neighbors go forward and hear their shouts of rejoicing and public prayer. It seemed to cheapen the whole experience.

"Night after night, when they reached this part of the service, and the penitents went forward, I would slip out of the church, and walk home alone through the cold dark night. But I could not shake off the compulsion of Dr. Naftzger's appeal. Finally, at the end of two weeks, I determined to yield. I made up my mind in the afternoon and went to church with my decision made.

"When the call came, I walked down the center aisle, and knelt at the chancel rail. Dr. Naftzger immediately rose, and kneeling beside me, put his arm around me and wept. He whispered in my ear that at last his dream had come true, and that he was confident I would on that night dedicate my life to the Christian ministry. The memory of his fervor, the echo of his whispering voice in my ear brings me a strange

emotion, even after all these years. It was probably due more to his insistence than my own conviction that I was able to dedicate my life to the ministry on that particular night. By some strange spiritual alchemy, he succeeded in putting his own mature dream of a life of service into my heart. From that day to this, I have taken a fairly straight road, with consistent devotion and consecration to the task to which I addressed myself in my seventeenth year."

CHAPTER II

FISHERS OF MEN

On one of our frequent trips home from India, Fred took me to visit his birthplace in Greencastle, Pennsylvania, and to the austere German Reformed church in which he was baptized. In the old cemetery we found the graves of earlier Fishers, and of his mother's forbears, Bohns, Shireys, Ruth-rauffs, a line of preachers and reformers.

Greencastle was only nine miles from the Mason-Dixon line. Fred's grandmother, Maria Bohn Shirey, who had spent her childhood across the line in Maryland, spoke with the soft, slurred accent of the south. She wore a black velvet ribbon around her white throat and a lace cap on her white hair, and she carried herself with the proud assurance of the gently bred southern woman of the old regime.

Through the mists of childhood memories, Fred recalled Grandmother's stories of the underground railway for runaway slaves, for she was a staunch abolitionist and had given the use of her own home as an underground station. Fred learned from her that people are not "niggers and whites—they are just people." God was color blind she said, and she told him that in the midst of the War between the States, "Grandfather used to call on an old Negro preacher to lead prayers in our home. And, son, that old preacher must have had hold of the keys of heaven, because he could pray you right through to the city of God."

God was color blind. This was Fred's earliest lesson in world unity. He clung to this precept and it helped shape his later life as he roamed the highways of the world. An In-

dian leader said of Fred in later years, "The Bishop had a soul aflame with love for India. He was color blind."

Fred was descended from generations of ecclesiastics on his father's side as well as on his mother's. On his bedroom wall hung a portrait of the Blessed John Fisher (1469-1533) who, as the Bishop of Rochester, England, gave the motto, "I will make you fishers of men" to the Fisher family. "No silent fisherman, but a dynamo," Fred used to chuckle and quote Blessed John's frank criticism of Henry VIII because he considered Henry's divorce from Catherine illegitimate and sinful. The only Bishop who dared resist the King, Blessed John did not mince words. "The King," he said, "as sovereign Lord is not supreme head on earth of the Church of England." After this defiance, the King cast Bishop John into the Tower and later had him beheaded. The King could silence his mouth for the time being but the Bishop's words live on.

Old Hingham to New

Fred's Fisher ancestors came to this country in the early 1700's from Norfolk county, England. After a first stop in Philadelphia, where one of the family, a Beaver, became an early Governor of Pennsylvania, they found their way to the southwestern part of the state. On one of our stop-overs in England, we visited the town of Hingham and in the graveyard, read the weather-beaten tombstones, engraved with all the Fisher family names, the Rev. Frederick F. Fisher; James Edward Fisher, his father's name. It was mere chance that had led Fred to purchase a home in Hingham, Massachusetts, which should serve as a permanent base during his years of missionary wanderings. And it gave him pleasure to discover this bond in his own person between the old-world Hingham and the new.

Aside from the sentiment involved, Fred questioned the

importance of inherited tendencies. The subject of racial differences interested him profoundly. He read all the standard authorities on anthropology and genetics. In the end, he discounted the importance of biological pulls as compared with other influences. Among his papers, I found a memorandum, dictated in 1933. It reads:

"Gradually, I have released myself from the serious consideration of biological background, and have climbed over into a very deep belief in the cosmic, magnetic, upward and expansive pull.

"I think that is one of the weaknesses of our study of genetics. We keep probing back to discover origins and sometimes believe that when we have found origins, we have found an explanation. As a matter of fact, origins will never fully explain present tendencies or achievements, and certainly genetics or origins can never explain future possibilities. I have much more of a sense of being pulled by some far-off and expected event in the future, than of being pushed from inherited tendencies or drives."

Fred was born on Saint Valentine's Day, February 14, 1882, in his grandmother's handsome old red-brick house in Greencastle. It was due to the whim of his arrogant young mother that Fred, the Indiana boy, was born in Pennsylvania.

His father, James Edward Fisher, a clerk in the railroad company, and his mother, Josephine Bohn Shirey, had begun their married life in Greencastle, where their first son, Charles, was born. Mr. Fisher, a sensitive, thoughtful man always felt apologetic for having taken his young wife away from her comfortable home to contend with frontier hardships. They settled first in Newcastle, Indiana. When the young wife was carrying her second child—Fred—she became so homesick that she returned to Pennsylvania for a visit. Mr. Fisher was by that time station-master of the little

town, but, in a panic over his wife's absence, he sold his house and most of their belongings and hurried back to join her.

Mrs. Fisher, with the inconsistency of a strong-willed young woman was not pleased by this tribute. She did not, it seems, want to settle down permanently in this poky little town of her childhood. She had wanted to go home for her confinement, but with that over, she was ready to turn her face westward again. Obediently, her young husband transported what was left of their household goods and their family—a small boy and an infant—back again to Indiana. It was their third trip across country in three years.

In spite of Fred's tender affection for his mother, he regarded this incident as the turning point in his parents' lives. His mother's will had triumphed. Psychologically she took control of the family fortunes at that point. He always felt that his father might have made more of a success in a worldly way if he had not followed his wife back to Pennsylvania but had stood his ground as head of the house, and had taken it for granted that his wife must come back to him in their Indiana home.

The return to Newcastle did not work out well. Mr. Fisher had given up his job as station-master and sold his home. Now he had to begin all over again. They decided it would be easier to make the new beginning in another community, and they moved to Elwood, Indiana. Here they were neighbors of Wendell Willkie's family. Mrs. Willkie was president, and Mrs. Fisher vice-president of the Methodist Missionary Society. Fred's younger brother, Harry, was in the same class in school with Wendell. The Fishers lived in a low white house with classic pillars and wings reaching back on either side, called for some unknown reason the "shoo-fly house."

It was the flurry and hurrah of the gas boom that finally drew them to Muncie. There Father and Mother Fisher set-

tled down and stayed until, in the latter years, they came to live with Fred and myself in our Hingham, Massachusetts, home. Two of Fred's brothers, Charles, the eldest, and Howard are still in Muncie. Charles works in a bank; Howard, the third son, in a Muncie factory. Harry, the youngest brother, came east to New Haven and has been for the past sixteen years a Director of Social Research at Yale University.

Odd Jobs

While he was still in high school, Fred worked to earn money towards his college expenses. He took any job that offered. After school he ran elevators, curried horses, cleaned out stables, served as janitor in a bank. Saturday was his big day; he sold shoes from eight in the morning until nine or ten at night, and earned two dollars for the day.

One night, after a fourteen-hour day, the tired boy was on his way home when, crossing Center Square, he heard a soapboxer making a speech. Fred, always interested in the technique of oratory, lingered to listen. The man was selling patent medicines. His appeal was simple.

"Are you all tired out, so you can scarcely push one foot in front of the other?" asked the man in deep sympathetic tones. "Are you always hungry, so that no matter how much you eat, you always have a craving for more?"

Fred, with the appetite of a growing boy recognized both of these symptoms as fitting him to a T. He was alarmed to learn that he undoubtedly had a tapeworm. Fortunately, the man with the rich voice and kindly manner had a bottle of medicine guaranteed to cure this embarrassing condition. It cost just two dollars. Fred looked wistfully at the two crumpled dollar bills for which he had toiled fourteen hours. It would be well worth the cost to cure his tiredness and that gnawing appetite. Triumphantlly he showed the bottle to his

mother, and accepted her sarcastic comments with due humility.

Naive in worldly ways, Fred stood head and shoulders above his class-mates in high school. In his senior year he had been elected student president of the school and editor of the *Argus*, the two highest posts that the school offered. At home it had long been settled that Fred was going to college, but the question of which college occasioned many hours of argument.

A half-dozen boys and girls from his class were going to De Pauw. His father was a trustee of the university, and the family had taken it for granted that he would go there. So had Fred until recent months. At the last moment, in the face of rather heated opposition, Fred had changed his mind. He announced that he was going to Asbury College at Wilmore in the blue-grass region of Kentucky. It was a "holiness college," a religious institution supported by what we should today call fundamentalists.

Judged from the standpoint of Fred's manhood interests and his liberal religious faith, De Pauw would have seemed a more congenial choice. The secret of Fred's sudden change was the influence of his spiritual mentor, Dr. Naftzger. The Doctor's wish was law. Fred Fisher and, a few years later, E. Stanley Jones are probably the two most famous graduates of this college. Both were to devote their lives to India.

The intensity of Fred's loyalty to the Doctor is evidenced by the financial complications which this change involved. Fred had saved some money towards college, but not enough to see him through his first year. His excellent standing in church and community would easily have secured him a scholarship for De Pauw. It did not hold good for Asbury, however, which was controlled by the Methodist Church, South, at that time, and until very recently was completely separated from the Methodist Church, North, of Indiana.

Borrowing money is never an easy matter for a young man without backing. In the Muncie of the nineties, it was a real achievement. The Lynds report the story of a local banker who was a rising young business man when Fred was growing up. "In 1890," this banker told the Lynds, "you had to have cash to buy. I wanted to buy a \$750 lot and I had only \$350 in cash. The man wanted cash, and there was no place in town where I could raise the money—so I lost the place." The Lynds add the comment, "It was a matter of pride to be able to say, 'I always pay cash for the things I buy.' " ¹

Fred wanted to borrow money for a non-material purpose, an education, something that had no material substance to which mortgages could be attached. But Fred had, even then, something which surpassed material values. He had a convincing personality and a gift for inspiring confidence.

One of the men for whom Fred had worked while in high school was a Mr. A. L. Johnson, owner of the Johnson building. After school Fred ran the elevator, emptied waste baskets, cleaned cuspidors, did whatever was asked of him. Mr. Johnson was not a Methodist, he was a Universalist. But he knew a good boy when he saw one. When Fred told him about needing money to go to Asbury, Mr. Johnson took Fred over to the bank and told them to give the young man whatever he needed. He, Johnson, would sign the note.

It was agreed that Fred should pay seven per cent interest. Later on when Fred was able to repay the loan, Mr. Johnson did not want to accept the money. On Fred's insistence, Mr. Johnson took it and put most of it into a fund for mission work in India, to be used under Fred's supervision.

In 1899, at the close of the century, seventeen-year-old Fred entered upon his college life. Only students as single-minded as he could have survived the regimen.

¹ *Middletown* by Robert S. and Helen M. Lynd. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1929.

The pious elders in control imposed a puritanical austerity. They permitted no fraternities or sororities, no honor societies, no athletic competitions. They gave no prizes for anything. Attendance at morning chapel and Sunday church was compulsory. Meals began with a long, solemn grace, and it was a serious matter to be late for grace.

Looking back, Fred used to wonder that he who, in later life, rebelled against the slightest restraint, should have felt no sense of repression. He said that there was an unusual spiritual unity of faculty and scholars. If a student was not congenial, he dropped out. Those who stayed entered heartily into the simple asceticism of the life.

"They gave us a good grounding," said Fred, "in Latin and Greek, English literature and public speech. That and religion were all that we got. But it was enough. I wouldn't give up what Asbury College gave me for anything else in the world."

During his second year at college, Fred, with his instinct for leadership, founded a branch of the Student Volunteer Movement. He thereby became the logical candidate for delegate to the Student Volunteer Convention in Toronto the following year, 1902. Special cars were chartered for the delegates from southern colleges. At Cincinnati they joined other special cars from Indiana and Illinois to make a special train trip through Buffalo and Niagara Falls to Toronto.

The trip marked an epoch in Fred's life. It was the first time this inexperienced boy had broken through the boundaries of his limited provincial setting. It was his first visit to a metropolitan city, his first trip out of the United States into another country, his first contact with a picked group of students of his own aggressive capacity, his first glimpse of men of the calibre of the famous religious leaders who addressed the convention—John R. Mott, Robert E. Speer, Bishop Thoburn of India. Lastly, and most important, it

was his first contact with a representative of the land which was to engage his enthusiasm and service through many years—India.

Fred Fisher arrived in Toronto duly impressed with his responsibilities as an official delegate to this international conference of twelve hundred college students. He studied the program minutely. He must not miss anything.

Boy and Bishop

Bishop Thoburn was scheduled to speak on the first Friday evening. Fred arrived early and sat in the front row. He described the Bishop as a short man with a long beard, sparing of gestures, but with a voice like a soft volcano. The Bishop ended his talk by raising his arm high above his head and saying solemnly, "Young gentlemen, the Man of Calvary is by my side." Fred was swept off his feet. The world seemed to stand still and the reality of a mystical experience came upon him. He left the hall in a dream.

It was announced that the Bishop would be glad to meet students interested in India. Fred, the hero worshipper, had accepted India with the same headlong impulsiveness with which he had accepted Asbury College. He went eagerly to the appointed place, and was chagrined to find most of the delegate body of twelve hundred students also waiting for the Bishop. Fred was so deeply agitated by the Bishop's message that he determined to have a private talk with him. He must seize this opportunity to make the Bishop aware of Fred Fisher. Listening to the Bishop in a group of a thousand students was not enough. "I was just a lost little boy in the crowd."

Immediately after the Sunday morning service he set out for the home of the Toronto minister who was entertaining the Bishop. The clergyman told him grudgingly that Bishop Thoburn was dining with Mr. Massey. It was a two-mile

walk in the cold Canadian winter over slippery streets, but that meant nothing to Fred. Thoburn was more than a bishop to this lad. He was a man with a big idea who was doing something about it. By his work among the lowest classes of India, the outcastes, Thoburn had antagonized high-caste Hindus, British officials, and even, it must be admitted, some of the American missionaries in India. But it was as the champion of the under dog that he especially appealed to Fred. Who could be a more suitable hero for Grandmother Maria's grandson?

For a minute, as Fred pulled at the old-fashioned bell on the Masseys' front door, he was frightened by his own temerity in pursuing the Bishop unbidden. But he stood his ground and asked the maid, "Is Bishop Thoburn here?" While the maid hesitated, knowing that the Bishop was at dinner, Fred, his heels crusted with snow, pushed past her, and skidding over the polished floor, catapulted through the arched doorway into the dining room. Thoburn, napkin in hand, rose to meet him.

"How do you do, young man," said Thoburn.

Fred beamed at him, "How do you do, Bishop. I've decided to go to India."

"Oh, have you? When are you going?"

"Just as soon as I finish college."

"That's great," said Thoburn, "let's sit down and talk about it." And he led the way into the drawing room. Unmindful of a dinner growing cold and of an impatient hostess, the Bishop and the boy talked on. Thoburn outlined the map of India on his napkin, while Fred engraved it on his heart. When Mrs. Massey finally appeared in the doorway, Bishop Thoburn apologized:

"Excuse me, Mrs. Massey, I always get absorbed when anybody asks me about India."

The man who had inspired millions on both sides of the

ਅਮਰਿੰਦਰ ਕਾਮਤ,
ਕਾਮਰੀ

11 - 12

der Sister

I have yours of Oct-17th
received yesterday.

To send you season's
greetings is a mockery
when hatred reigns
supreme & God of love
& Truth ^{is} disowned.

Here are a few lines
for your book.

I had the privilege
of coming in close contact
with ~~the~~ the late Bishop
Fisher. He seemed to me
to be one among the few
Christians who walked
in the fear of the Lord
& therefore feared no
man.

Yours sincerely,
M. Gandhi

world and the provincial boy were drawn together not only by a passion for India, but by a temperamental kinship, an ability to cut red tape and make straight for their goal. Neither of them had an atom of self-consciousness. The thing to be done was more important than the doer. Fred's real spiritual ordination was given him that day at the hands of this man of God. As they stood saying good-by, Bishop Thoburn placed his hands on Fred's head, and said:

"Although no conference has elected you to ordination, I hereby set you apart for Christ and the world."

Fred fairly floated back to his boarding-house—back to finish college. From that day on, he pushed aside the narrowing walls of sectarianism, even those of nationalism. In his mind still blazed the Bishop's speech on that first evening. Fred always treasured a transcript of Thoburn's words that night. They were to become the theme of his own life message.

"Do not preach against idolatry. Do not preach against the Mahomedan religion. Never preach against any religion as a religion. You merely shut up the hearts of the people who hear you without accomplishing any good purpose. I am speaking now from experience, for if I could recall a thousand sermons I have preached, I would gladly do so.

"Never ridicule the religious practices or ideas of the people. That was not our Master's course in this world. On the other hand, take that which is common to all religions. If you point to the mountains and the stars and the forests, and say, 'God made all these,' the people will agree with you. But you can put even that in such language that they will contradict you. I did not know enough to avoid contradiction in earlier days. But I think, for the past twenty years in India, I have never been contradicted by anyone in public."

Fred reached maturity just in time to draw inspiration

from those rugged pioneers, the Methodist bishops of the last century, who first had a vision of international world service for their church and of ultimate world unity. They were spiritual forerunners of today's complex efforts towards an international world order. A directory published by the Twentieth Century Fund in 1943 lists 137 agencies, public and private, in this country alone which are making serious efforts to contribute to a framework for international unity after the war.

These nineteenth-century bishops were John the Baptists, voices crying in the wilderness their version of this same message, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Their vision, too, was of world unity and brotherly love. Fred was thrilled by the boldness of the concept, and he took it for his own life work.

With his instinct for finding heroes, Fred loved to tell stories of these old crusaders. "There was William Taylor, a six-footer with a long flowing beard. He began as a forty-niner in the days of the California gold rush, but his prospecting was for souls rather than gold. He was an expert lumber man and magnificent swimmer and it was said that he had swum from one side to the other of the Golden Gate.

"After California, he became a world evangelist, traveling up and down the globe without salary and without backing, diplomatic or ecclesiastical. He spent five or six years in India and left behind him a trail of self-supporting missions in the principal cities of India : Calcutta, Bombay, Bangalore, Madras, Agra, Lahore, and many more.

"Next, Taylor invaded South Africa where he became an intimate friend of Cecil Rhodes and other leading figures of the time. In 1884 when Taylor returned to the United States for the quadrennial conference of his Church, he brought with him an African baby that he had adopted. Standing in one of the largest auditoriums in Philadelphia he made a mas-

terly address upon the black race and the continent of Africa—with this little black baby placidly resting in the crook of his great arm. The impression was tremendous. Thousands of dollars poured in for the African mission. Within thirty days, William Taylor had been elected bishop in charge of the missionary work on the continent of Africa.”

Thrilled by such picturesque methods and appeals, Fred was ready to sail for India on the day he graduated from college. However, a boy of twenty was too young to be accepted for foreign service. Also, he must serve at least two years in preparation for his ordination as a deacon.

Dr. Naftzger secured for Fred, immediately after his graduation, a license to preach, an “exhorter’s license” it was called. In the bundle of his most cherished papers which Fred left behind when he was called away on his last long voyage was the little typewritten certificate as an Exhorter, signed with the flowing script of Leslie J. Naftzger.

During the examination which preceded the granting of this certificate, Fred carried himself as befitted a spiritual descendant of the invincible Blessed John Fisher. He was asked a long list of questions by the examining board.

“No,” he told them, “I do not smoke.”

“Will you promise never to smoke?” the elders asked.

“No, sir,” was his surprising reply. Fred’s father and uncle, both good men whom he respected, smoked. Fred reasoned that while he had no intention of smoking himself, he refused to label smoking as a sin. The Prince-Albert-coated elders were shocked and retired to confer. They returned with more questions, but the candidate was obdurate. In the end it was the elders who yielded. In spite of his wilful strong-headedness, they decided that the boy had good stuff in him and must be passed.

Dr. Naftzger saw to it that as soon as he was ready, the church authorities gave him a charge. Fred made his humble

beginning as a circuit rider. His headquarters were Beamer Chapel, a tiny wooden building in the industrial section of Kokomo. He was also responsible for a mission in the village of Hopewell which he reached by horse and buggy.

Thirty Dollars a Month

Fred's new parishioners in Kokomo tactfully but firmly conveyed to him their hope that he would pick himself a wife and settle down at his earliest convenience. Undaunted by a salary of thirty dollars a month, Fred went back to Muncie to talk things over with his childhood sweetheart. Edith Jackson had attended the old High Street Church with him and had sat under the spell of Dr. Naftzger. She had been his classmate in high school. She had been away from Muncie for a time, while studying in the New England Conservatory of Music—an experience which made her seem an infinitely travelled and sophisticated young woman to the boy Fred. She was a pretty, dainty girl, interested in whatever interested him. It was with pride and a rich sense of supplementing what he had to offer that, in February, 1903, before his first year as a pastor was over, Fred introduced his bride to his little congregation in Beamer Chapel.

These simple working men and women may sometimes have been puzzled by some of the enthusiastic college boy's flights of fancy and by his quotations from Goethe and Byron and Whitman. But he was preaching with a passion new to their community, and they responded to the spirit of their young preacher-dynamo. They packed the little chapel and they raised his salary from \$360 to a full \$1000 the next year.

Ingeniously, he adapted his notebook habit to the practical needs of his parish work. He recorded in these books every sermon, every text, every prayer-meeting subject, from the beginning of his preaching life in Kokomo, to his last week

in Detroit, a period of thirty-six years. The number of people in his congregations and the calls he made were entered in black ink, the number of people converted in red ink!

It was characteristic of Fred that the first piece of furniture he bought on his thirty dollar salary was a massive mahogany davenport, so large that he had to cut its legs off before he could move it into the little house where he had rented a single, all-purpose living room for Edith and himself. This massive piece of furniture accompanied him on all his movings about the United States. Suitably housed at last, it now stands in the room he especially loved, his library at Pilgrimthorpe in Hingham, Massachusetts.

While he was giving himself unstintedly to the demands of his little circuit, Fred never lost sight of his goal—India. Nor did he let the church authorities forget it. There was as yet no money available for India, but buoyant Fred was confident that a way would be found.

Towards the end of his second year at Kokomo, the North Indiana Conference met in the church of his boyhood, the High Street Church of Muncie. Bishop Charles C. McCabe, the famous Civil War chaplain of Libby Prison, presided. He was another of the picturesque characters in Fred's gallery of heroes. He had a reputation as a money-raiser and always carried with him a little organ which folded up to the size of a suitcase. On the platform he kept it beside him, ready for instant action.

During the years when engineers were laying railroad tracks across the continent like so many gleaming steel ribbons, Mr. McCabe had served as secretary of the Church Extension Society, and he had his own inside lines into the offices of the railroad directors. He secured an agreement that, as the raw new communities of our pioneer west sprang up beside the railroad tracks, a certain proportion of building lots should be reserved for Methodist churches. It was

also Mr. McCabe's job to interest well-to-do Eastern churchmen in building little frame chapels across the sprawling prairies, and finally to recruit evangelists to take charge of these infant churches and create their congregations.

Tom Collins, a wealthy Pennsylvania lumberman, was one of his benefactors. One night at an informal meeting, when he was appealing for further gifts, Collins asked him tauntingly:

"You're always talking about building new churches McCabe, how many have you actually built?"

Mr. McCabe sat down at his open organ and on the spot improvised a song that was to become a classic in Methodist circles of the day. It began, "We're building two a day, dear Tom, we're building two a day." And it was a fact that the Methodist Episcopal Church Extension Society, keeping step with the incredible strides of our empire builders, was actually building two new churches a day, month after month, across the wilderness of our western plains.

When Mr. McCabe was elected secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, he enlarged the field of Mr. Collins' interest to encircle the world. For one gift, he secured the endowment of the Collins Institute in Calcutta with a fund of \$100,000. The Institute is a secondary school which prepares students for college, carrying them through the equivalent of an American high-school education.

All this was to come later. At the time of the annual conference in Muncie in 1904, when Bishop McCabe presided, one of the visiting celebrities was Bishop Warne of India. He had been told to look out for a young fellow named Fisher from Kokomo who was full of enthusiasm for India.

Fred, still an exhorter, had passed his examinations in theology and ethics and was scheduled to be ordained deacon at this conference. No funds were in sight to send Fred to India, but he was still hoping and praying.

The church was packed to the doors, galleries and all. Bishop McCabe, as Presiding Bishop, read out the list of candidates for deacon's orders. When he reached Fred's name, he turned to Bishop Warne and asked:

"Is this the young man who wishes to go to India?"

The Bishop said that he was the man. With a commanding gesture, Bishop McCabe stopped all the machinery of the conference program, and called upon the cabinet and the secretaries of the conference to come to the platform. Impressively he turned to Bishop Warne and asked:

"How much would it cost to send this young man and his wife to Agra where you wish to appoint him?"

"About six hundred dollars," said Bishop Warne.

"Very well," said Bishop McCabe, writing on a pad, "and how much is the salary of a young married missionary in India in these days?"

"Nine hundred and fifty dollars."

"Good! If we can get \$600 plus \$950 here this morning, I could appoint this young man to India as soon as he is ordained deacon. Is that right, Bishop?"

Bishop Warne nodded his head. Bishop McCabe continued:

"Excellent. There is always a certain shrinkage in collections, and I find that things usually cost more than a Bishop estimates. We must have \$1800."

To Fred's incredulous amazement, Bishop McCabe then turned to the white-haired ministers composing the cabinet of the conference and directed them to tear sheets of paper into slips and distribute them to every preacher and man and woman in the entire audience. Within fifteen minutes, Bishop McCabe had pledges to cover the \$1800, and he announced:

"I am not only ordaining this young man a deacon, but we are sending him to India this very year, where he will be our own representative in the mission field."

It always gave Fred special gratification that he was ordained deacon and sent to India from the very altar where he had knelt beside Dr. Naftzger as a young boy and consecrated his life to the service of God. Years later, the Muncie church authorities furnished a fitting sequel to the night when he was sent halfway round the world as their representative. Fred has left us his own account of the incident:

"On one of my visits home from India, I was notified that the High Street Church of Muncie had built a beautiful new cathedral church of Indiana limestone, and I was invited to attend the dedication. I was surprised and spiritually moved to discover that the official board had taken two feet of the old altar rail where I had knelt with Dr. Naftzger and where I had knelt to be ordained deacon by Bishop McCabe, and had put it in the center of the new altar, so that today, that church, built in the form of a cross, has, as its very center, the altar rail which symbolized so much in my own life. A tablet nearby gives the story of this block of wood. I have always been sorry that dear old Naftzger died before this church was built. It would have been a joy to stand at this altar and receive his blessing.

"If anyone were to ask me what is the spiritual thing that has moved me most deeply in all my life, I should say that it is the fact that I had grown to manhood from the little boy in Muncie, Indiana, had gone out across the world, and then had come back to my own church when I was forty-eight years old to find that they still loved me and believed in me enough to cut out that block of wood and make it the center of their great new church. This church represents the shrine of my heart. I go back to it over and over again, and I always enter the city of Muncie with a special spiritual humility, and a desire to tread softly and to love every citizen of the town."

CHAPTER III

PASSAGE TO INDIA

Crossing the Atlantic had been a glorious adventure for the pair of land-lubbers from the middle west. Eagerly they took advantage of a few days in England between ships to go sightseeing—the Tower of London, the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey where Fred sought out the tomb of Livingstone, another boyhood hero.

Even as long ago as July, 1904, six hundred dollars was a meagre travelling allowance for the trip to India. The young people travelled second class, joining the P. & O. boat at Tilbury Docks, bound for Bombay. At Marseilles, most of the ship's company, travelling first class, came aboard. It costs more but is vastly more comfortable to cross Europe by train, avoiding the rough seas that buffet the ship round the coast of Portugal and through the Straits of Gibraltar.

Fred and Edith observed the arrogance of the English colonials with puzzled surprise. American travelling companions shut up together upon the high seas for a three-weeks trip would normally observe such courtesies as good mornings to one's breakfast table companions and small talk with the neighbors in adjoining steamer chairs on deck. Not so with the British. Even in the second class, they are chary of striking up shipboard acquaintances and expert at protecting themselves behind an armor of snubs, cuts, and haughty silences. Fred, with his irrepressible good humor, was amused. He decided that the English took themselves much too seriously and continued to speak when occasion offered. Artlessly he broke through the dour crust, and established pleasant relations with several shipmates whom he

plied with questions. His luggage bulged with books on India—travel, history, missionary memoirs, and handbooks. But he had a hundred questions of his own for which he wanted answers.

Another shock was in the offing. At first Fred mistrusted his own ears—perhaps he misunderstood, perhaps they were pulling his leg, as they would say. Reluctantly he realized that the typical British colonial regards India from a height of weary condescension. Indians are lumped together as inferiors, niggers, with no distinction between the cultivated Brahmin scholar and primitive aborigines and outcastes.

Fred soon knew the British colonial patter by heart—the beggars must jolly well be kept in their places. Some firebrands and rascals among them were always making mischief. The great mass of India ryots—peasants—were too ignorant and too poor to want anything—except enough to eat. It was the little group of educated Indians who made all the trouble—probably a mistake to educate any of the blighters; trouble was you had to have a supply of clerks to run the blasted country.

With a sinking heart Fred listened to the hackneyed White Man's Burden theme. He recognized it from the pages of Kipling. In his delight with the genius of the story-teller and the rich tapestry of Kipling's background and atmosphere, he had ignored the implications of the philosophy. Now he met it face to face. On board ship were several young Indians returning from the English public schools and universities. They came of old and distinguished families. They had conformed to British standards and had won England's own hall-mark in their university degrees. Depressed, Fred watched ill-bred white sahibs from England's lower middle classes snub and affront these young Indians.

Resolutely, Fred determined to see both sides. He reminded himself of what he had just been reading of the mag-

nificent constructive achievements of British administration in India—thirty thousand miles of railroad built; nearly seventeen million acres of land put under irrigation; the beginnings of an educational system; headway against India's two most colossal problems, famine and plague. This was not a record to be lightly dismissed. The English were free with their criticism of meddling Americans who made trouble trying to import their ideas of democracy into a civilization thousands of years old before there was any United States of America. You cannot change an old country like that overnight, they told him. Fred determined to hold his peace for the present, but he brooded over the complexity of the problems that awaited him and prayed for guidance.

Here was a ship full of white sahibs facing east, and yet, the nearer they sailed to Hindustan, the more they talked of "home" and Great Britain, the deeper the abyss between them and India. The surprised young American, descendant of abolitionists and reformers, noted: "They talk in so superior a fashion of the people of India whose history dates back at least as far as the Egyptian era and perhaps farther!"

Fred and Edith's new home was to be in Agra—the city of fire. It was a long leap from industrial Kokomo with its belching smoke stacks and its long winters to Agra of the Taj Mahal, where hot dust storms drove in with such fury as to keep the marble buildings polished white.

The landing in Bombay had been like a dream from the Arabian Nights. Fred entered Agra with an almost proprietary sense for this beautiful, unfamiliar city. Eager to find his place, and to be of service, he wandered through the streets as bemused as a child at a fair. The shops had no doors or windows. They lined the city streets like rows of booths, separated by partitions. On a low platform, perhaps two feet high, covered with padded white cloth, the proprietor sat, cross-legged and barefooted, leaning against a

pile of pillows and round white bolsters, waiting for a customer. Fred soon learned to slip off his shoes, and to sit cross-legged leaning against the customer's pile of pillows, sipping the cup of tea instantly whisked out of nowhere, discussing, with a mixture of his few words of Hindustani and the shopkeeper's English, prospective purchases for his new home.

Fabric of Enchantment

Fred came to know India in her moments of incredible beauty and in her plague spots of horrifying poverty, disease and ugliness. He counted himself fortunate in having been assigned to Agra, site of one of the world's most famous shrines. The Taj Mahal was built about 1630 by Shah Jehan as a memorial to his favorite wife who had died in bearing her eighth child. None of the Shah's other wives could console him. He mourned for his lost Mumtaz Mahall (Chosen of the Palace) all his life and vowed that she should have the most beautiful tomb ever built. For twenty years he kept a force of twenty-two thousand men at work in day and night shifts, carving the lace-like traceries of marble screens, inlaying the precious mosaics of floor and ceiling.

Tourists plan to visit Agra at the full of the moon so that they may see the Taj by moonlight. Fred's and Edith's schedule could not wait. Arriving in the dark of the moon, they spent their first night on a neighboring roof top so that their first glimpse of the Taj might be in the rosy light of dawn. All his life Fred remembered that morning vision.

His mind let go a thousand things,
Like dates of wars and deaths of kings,
And yet recalled that special hour.

The Taj symbolized for Fred the beauty of this exotic land, and it stood for something more. The elegance, the refinement of detail, the dazzling whiteness of this memorial

of human love, awed him and gave him a sense of worship as he approached it. He studied the detail of the marble building that had been "finished by jewelers," the lintels around the doorways inlaid with sprays of flowers of lapis lazuli, agate, carnelian, and turquoise; the pierced marble screen before the sarcophagus of the beloved wife and queen, Mumtaz, so delicately carved that in the pulsing heat of the Indian plain it seemed to wave like a curtain of priceless old lace.

Fred loved best to visit the Taj towards the end of the day. Twilight, after the hot sun was gone was, he thought, India's tenderest hour. Night after night pilgrims gathered to stroll beside the long, mirrorlike lagoons—Bedouins, Egyptians, Afghans, Chinese, Japanese, Indians from every province of the land, and Fred Fisher from Indiana, U.S.A. Leaving shoes, boots, sandals in the courtyard, they climbed at last up into the dome and listened in reverent silence to the call of the muezzin from the tip of the minaret, "Allah Akbar—there is no God but Allah and Mahomed is his prophet." In the magic of the moment their differences vanished; all were caught up in the transfiguring power of human aspiration, in the unity of worship.

The variety of the Indian scene charmed Fred—the bazaars, the compounds of the white sahibs with their silent, barefooted servants in turbans and long white coats, the ornate carving of the temples, the gorgeous coloring, but it was the Indian people in whom he was primarily interested.

The freshman missionary to India has the advantage that English is spoken everywhere. All the schools conducted by the British Raj or government use English; even in quite small villages someone speaks English. This did not satisfy Fred, however. He could not wait until he could talk in their own language to the great mass of Indians who go through life without schooling of any sort.

His first act was to engage a language teacher, Mirhadi, a Persian scholar and a Muslim, to teach him Urdu. Each morning Fred savored anew the romantic picture of this handsome Indian striding down the palm-lined roadway, across the broad veranda, his long, embroidered robe blowing in the breeze, his white turban wound about his head with fastidious precision.

"When he came into my room," Fred wrote in his notebook, "I was aware not only of his new language but of an old and sophisticated civilization."

Scones for Sahibs

In his exuberance Fred was all unconscious of taking an attitude objectionable to some of the missionaries. But he soon learned.

The young Fishers shared the missionary home of a Scotch widow, who undertook to instruct them in correct white sahib usage. Fred had naturally invited the Indians to come and see him. His first caller was a young preacher, whom Fred asked to stay for tea. The Scotch woman was indignant. She had taught her Indian cook to make delicious scones but she would not share them with an Indian! Scones were for sahibs.

"You are outraging all sense of decency which we British have built up through the years, and you can't invite those Indians inside this house," she told Fred. "If you must see them, you'll have to see them on the veranda—but never invite them for tea, young man, for they certainly won't be served."

Fred met this dilemma as he was to meet many others—with a compromise that involved no basic surrender. So long as they stayed at the Scotch woman's, Indians were received on the veranda, and Edith arranged to brew the tea, using their own tea things.

While Fred's primary interest was in the Indians, he was also responsible for English services in the Agra Methodist Episcopal Church. Numbers of British Tommies drifted in to these services; soon their officers followed. Later the English nonconformist community came in such numbers that the church could not hold them and the overflow sat in their carriages listening to the service through the open windows. "We were not able to find seats for all of them," Fred smiled as he remembered back, "but you may be sure we did not neglect them when it came to taking up the collection, and the deacons passed the baskets around to every carriage waiting outside."

The Outcaste Touches a Queen

At the unveiling of a statue of Queen Victoria in the park, Agra officials invited Fred to deliver the invocation. The usual preliminary exercises finished, silence spread over the vast throng. They were waiting for an English Prince to pull a ribbon releasing a silk Union Jack which would reveal the statue of the Queen Empress. The Prince pulled, but nothing happened. Everybody waited. The Prince pulled again. The cord broke. Queen Victoria was still hidden behind her veil, not unlike her Muslim women subjects standing in the park, concealed by their boorkas. Even Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, was nonplussed.

On the far outskirts of the crowd where the pariahs stood, Fred saw a commotion. Presently a little outcaste urchin came struggling through to the platform. The boy wore a loin cloth and a dirty cotton scarf thrown over his shoulder. There was a whispering among the aides and equerries surrounding Lord Curzon, and Fred heard the Viceroy say, "Right-o." While the crowd waited in awed silence, the outcaste boy began to climb the pedestal. Resting upon Victoria's knees, the boy boosted himself to her shoulder, and finally

he stood upon her regal head. As he loosened the Union Jack, cheers rose equally for the Queen Empress and for the little outcaste.

The boy was soon lost again in the crowd. Fred went home, meditating on the parable. Did not this unknown boy symbolize the potential power of fifty million outcastes who one day might achieve for India what the kings and queens have never been able to accomplish?

In later years Fred used this incident to help raise the first million dollars pledged to the mass movement which interpreted Christianity to the outcastes of India.

Later still, with the outcastes always on his heart, from a hospital bed in Ranchi, India, he wrote:

THE OUTCASTES

They come! The men of sorrows come,
From out the toiler's dusty road,
Forsaking superstition's load,
Escaping slavehood's bitter goad,
In faith, they come.

They come! The care-worn women come,
From out the hovel's prison door,
Its sunless walls and mud-dung floors,
Bowed down in grief and sorrows sore,
In hope, they come.

They come! The little children come,
Already weary, having toiled,
But eager, hopeful, bright, unspoiled,
Though born in stables, souls unsoiled,
Christ-like, they come.

They come! The wakened millions come,
They see the Cross where Jesus died,
Behold the wound-print in His side,

They turn and follow this dear guide,
Redeemed, they come.

They come! Who greets them as they come?
Shall we who know the Saviour's love,
With palsied hand, unworthy prove!
Oh, let us stand, like Christ above,
And *bid* them come!

Universal Tolerance

In his reading, Fred had been fascinated by accounts of the great Moghul Akbar, and especially by his interest in religion, and his efforts in a time of frenzied intolerance—the mid-sixteenth century—to apply the principle of universal tolerance.

One of Fred's earliest excursions was to Akbar's capital, the deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri, twenty-two miles from Agra. Fred and Edith drove over with pony and tonga.

Akbar's great wall, encircling a city almost seven miles in diameter, is still standing. But the city is gone, and the dazzling Indian sun shines down upon acres of empty fields and orchards. On the crest of a hill, however, in startling completeness and repair, the magnificent Jami Musjid quadrangle of the Emperor's palace still stands. Fred sought out the impressive Hall of Public Audience and the Mosque. It was close to the Mosque that the Emperor had erected the building which most intrigued Fred's imagination, the 'Ibadat Khana, a great hall for the discussion of religion and theology. To his court the Emperor invited representatives of most of the principal religions of the sixteenth century, Hindu pandits, Christian missionaries from Goa, Jains and Parsees. Sitting on a raised dais in his House of Worship, Akbar discussed theology with unflagging zeal.

Born a Musalman of the Sunni sect, Akbar was tempera-

mentally more sympathetic to the mysticism of the Sufi sect. All his life he tried to reconcile conflicting creeds and to make progress towards universal toleration. For a time this Muslim Emperor wore on his forehead the sectarian mark of the Hindu. In the end, he renounced the Muslim mode of life, and was approaching the Hindu ideal of Dharma, modified by Zoroastrian and Christian influences.

This visit to the city that served for half a century as the capital of the greatest of the Moghul emperors, Akbar, moved Fred deeply. He often speculated over the difference not only to India, but to the British Empire, and to the world, if the Emperor had succeeded in working out a reconciliation of faiths which would have permitted India to present a unified front to the invaders. He translated the problem into terms of the present, and tried to imagine what it would mean to India today if the stupid, unnecessary schisms of religious antagonism could be wiped out.

Abraham and Nanak

Fred went back to Agra, eager to discuss these questions with both Hindus and Muslims. To his delight, he found the Indians eager to talk about religion. No one discussed God in the grocery store in Kokomo, but in India they quoted the Koran or the Gita as a matter of course. Fred had read and reread the Bhagavad Gita on the steamer; he was delighted by its kinship in style and subject matter to passages in the New Testament.

"I have come here to Agra," he told the Indians, "to live among you as one of your friends. I want to enter into your way of life as far as you will permit me. I want to eat your food, share your social life, know your children, read your books, understand your religion."

Fred was determined that the teaching was not to be one-

sided in his new mission field, but that he should learn as well as teach. He sought friends in every school of thought, and the Indians responded eagerly to his unstudied advances. So Fred outlined his own course in comparative religions. He set up his own 'Ibadat Khana for his discussions. He studied the Vedas with Hindus and the Koran with Muslims. It was a Sikh friend who told him the dramatic story of Nanak, the founder of their religion. He told me the story in Palestine when we visited the reputed altar where Abraham was called upon to sacrifice his son Isaac. In the Bible story, a lamb was finally sacrificed in the boy's stead, and Fred was interested by the similar theme of the Sikh story.

Nanak had begun life as a Muslim priest. He had a commanding personality, something of the Abraham type. Gradually his own individual message took shape. He went from village to village, preaching the unity of God and the oneness of human faith. He attracted a large following and the time came when he needed to know upon whom he could rely. He put his followers to a dramatic test. He called for a gathering of his disciples at the Five Sacred Hills. "Five volunteers," he told them sternly, "will have to offer up their lives as a sacrifice for the sins of us all. Who will volunteer?"

A groan went up as a beloved Prince stepped forward. He entered Nanak's tent, followed by Nanak, carrying an unsheathed sword. The people waited breathless. In a few moments Nanak reappeared, his sword dripping with blood. Holding it high above his head, Nanak demanded a second sacrifice. Another young leader entered the tent. Again Nanak disappeared, to return with freshly-blooded sword. For the third, fourth, and fifth times he demanded this supreme sacrifice. Five stalwart sons in turn went to the altar. Finally Nanak came forth and stuck his bloody sword into the ground. He threw back the tent flap and there stood the

five brave men unharmed. At their feet lay five dead lambs. It was these five men whom Nanak chose as his disciples to go forth and preach his message of the oneness of God and the brotherhood of man.

Give and Take

To Fred's surprise and pleasure he soon discovered that his Indian friends were not only interpreting their sacred books to him, but that they could throw new light and understanding upon his own scriptures. After all, the Bible is an oriental book, and its background was the very texture of their lives.

There was Ram Sahai, for instance, an ordained minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, whom I was to meet and love as Fred did, and who became one of Fred's lifelong friends. Ram was a northern Indian of strong, robust physique—a leader and teacher.

"The Bible," he told Fred, "is a natural book, and you westerners have in many places distorted it. For example, you always refer to three wise men. I think there were many more than three. Millions of our people make pilgrimages every year. There must have been scores of wise men who went on that journey to Bethlehem to greet the Christ Child. Some of them may have been Zoroastrians from Persia, some no doubt were Buddhists and Hindus from India. They met at the feet of the Christ Child in their age-long search for truth.

"The gifts the wise men brought were only symbols," Ram continued. "Gold has been precious in our part of the world a long time, but we have not exploited it in the modern manner. We have put our main emphasis on seeking golden truth. So the pilgrims brought to the Christ Child gold to symbolize the most precious thing in the world.

"The frankincense which Indian pilgrims may have laid

at the feet of the babe in the manger is to us a symbol of life-blood. Our method of gathering this rare perfume is to take the life-blood of the serrata tree. We pierce the tree's artery, the pungent resin flows out and clings to the bark like a cluster of teardrops until it hardens into frankincense. It is mixed with oil for perfume, or ground into powder. Gold and life-blood.

"Myrrh," concluded Ram Sahai, "is the scent eternal. The wise men's third gift represented the element of timelessness. Myrrh is used to anoint bodies before burial by those who do not cremate their dead. It is a little burr that grows under the leaves and is very difficult to find. Shepherds turn their lambs loose to wander among the low-hanging bushes and the lambs gather it all unconsciously, for it sticks to their wool."

With such simple, homely stories Ram Sahai expounded the Bible. Bethlehem and Jerusalem became real cities for Fred, inhabited by real people, although he was not actually to walk the roads of the Holy Land until he and I went there together in the summer of 1927.

He wove these stories of Ram Sahai's together to make his first booklet, "Gifts from the Desert," published by the Abingdon Press in 1916. He followed this with another series of meditations, "Garments of Power," published in 1919, an interpretation of Christianity in terms of oriental imagery.

"This is a pathway for mystics," wrote Fred. "It winds through the valleys of human reality and over the hills of vision. Except spiritual imagination accompany thee, enter not by this gate."

Fred was to develop conspicuous ability as an organizer and administrator, but he was also deeply mystical, and all his life the two strains, the practical and the mystical, were to be intertwined.

I remember when he told me about carrying a crucifix. It began with memories of reading Carlyle.

"Carlyle prodded me with a spear," said Fred. "He would spit at me and I would run to Emerson for comfort. It was hard to understand how Emerson could love Carlyle." It had thrilled Fred to learn that when Carlyle was writing the life of Cromwell, he kept a small bust of the Commoner on his desk and often stopped to chat with him.

"After Carlyle had written some challenging, controversial sentence," Fred told me, "he would stop and look at the bust and seek his endorsement. 'Isn't that right, sir?' he would ask. It was after I read about Carlyle and his bust of Cromwell that I bought my crucifix and began carrying it in my pocket."

"Don't you suppose you are the only Methodist minister in the world who carries a crucifix?" I murmured.

"What of it?" Fred replied. "The Christian heritage of the ages belongs to all of us. We have the privilege of selecting whatever appeals to us. Coming home from some long, controversial trip, worn out with argument and the heat of the Indian mofussil, I would look at that emaciated figure of Christ hanging on the cross, and I'd say, 'Was I all right, sir? Was I all right?'"

Maha Mela

Fred had been in India a year and a half when he witnessed a religious festival that epitomized all the hideous power of primitive superstition and ignorant priestcraft. It was one of the dark spots that furnish the melodramatic contrast to the beauty and poetry of Hindu life and Hindu philosophy.

Every year the Indians, who love to make pilgrimages, hold their melas, or religious fairs, in various sacred cities. Every twelfth year they hold a supreme festival, a Maha Mela they call it, in the city of Allahabad. The city stands

at the junction of India's two most sacred rivers, the Ganges and the Jumna. Bathing at the confluence of these rivers is always a sacred rite; on a certain day every twelve years, special benefits are conferred upon true believers.

An old stone fort, built in the days of Akbar on a triangle of land below the city, furnished a vantage point. Sunrise of the mela day found Fred standing on the walls of the fort, watching the crowd of well over a million pilgrims. They had been gathering for three days.

Only in the orient, where human life is cheap and suffering is accepted as a matter of course, may one see any such gathering of human beings packed in like cattle. Hollywood's most daring director has never attempted to portray such a mob scene. Water carriers, standing in the river, filled bullock skins, thrown over their shoulders, with water. With a deft pressure of the arm, they squirted the water back over the crowd. Men and women in the front ranks who had been standing there for forty-eight hours, their lips dry and cracked, reached up gaunt hands, and catching a few drops, licked at them eagerly. In the brutal undertow of this great crowd, men, women and children stumbled and fell and sometimes were trampled to death before they could get to their feet.

Standing above them on the walls of the old fort, a composite roar came up to Fred, sinister and terrifying, the shouts of camel and bullock drivers, the screams and groans of human beings. This great mass of humanity was struggling, enduring discomfort and agony—for what?—to gain certain, not too clearly defined, benefits which they hoped might follow upon their reaching this sacred spot at a certain time.

Fred, watching them, was at once fascinated and revolted by the sight. It symbolized the ruthless cruelty of an earlier stage in the evolution of society. It dramatized the inade-

quacy of those ethnic religions which fail to recognize the supreme importance of the individual. For them, human life in the mass has no value. Conscious of the mote in his own eye, Fred did not fail to note that our own failure to apply the Golden Rule and literally to love our neighbor is the basis of the gravest shortcomings of our Christian civilization, the inconsistency in our treatment of so-called inferior people. Our own American lynching problem, abuse of slave labor in the Congo, exploitation of the economically weak and helpless all over the world, result from this same lack of recognition of the importance of the individual. "Unless a social order build upon the fundamental principle of democracy," wrote Fred, "how can there be hope for development and growth?"

Far away on the other side of the world, Fred was working out his version of the social message of Christianity at the same time that Walter Rauschenbusch was preparing his own powerful statement of these principles which was to win him world-wide recognition and revolutionize the whole emphasis of Christian teaching.

India had presented to Fred, and he was grappling with, the problems to which he was to devote the utmost efforts of his manhood, the basic importance of the individual, and the ideal of universal tolerance.

CHAPTER IV

ADMINISTRATOR AND ORGANIZER

India offered Fred a rich variety of interests and he was absorbed by its demands upon him. He and Edith had assumed that they would remain for the usual five-year term before returning home on leave.

Their plans were upset by Edith's illness. The climate had been too difficult for her. She had been running a temperature for weeks, and the doctor advised an immediate return to the United States. At the end of two, instead of five years, late in 1906, they sailed back to this country, and Fred took Edith to her parents in Muncie for a period of recuperation.

Much as he regretted interrupting his work in India, resourceful Fred had a plan ready for making the most of the opportunity which this enforced return offered. Shortly before leaving India, Fred had had the privilege of meeting and serving as courier for two American professors. They were Charles Cuthbert Hall of Union Theological Seminary, sent to India by the Barrows Foundation to deliver a series of lectures on essential Christianity at Indian universities, and Borden Parker Bowne of Boston University, founder of the personalistic school of philosophy who happened to come to India at the same time.

Fortunately for Fred they came to Agra, and he was present at some of their discussions with local Indian pandits and teachers. Attracted by his interest, the Americans asked him to accompany them on their travels for the rest of their stay. This involved visiting several university centers, and meeting some of the leading scholars of India.

Fred, whose studies at Asbury College had not given him

much philosophical background, had already felt handicapped in attempts to hold his own in discussions with Hindu and Muslim pundits. He was eager to fill in the gaps in his training, and had no hesitation in making the necessary arrangements to travel with the two Americans for the rest of their stay. "I would have carried their bags, run errands, done anything to be near them."

Back in the United States, as soon as Edith was comfortably established with her parents, he looked up Professor Bowne at Boston University School of Theology. It was agreed that he should register for graduate work in Bowne's department. Fred met the problem of supporting himself during this interval, as he had met it at Asbury. He served as a supply minister and, between times, he took whatever offered, waited on table, washed dishes, sold gadgets from house to house.

Before long he was offered a charge—a little church in North Cohasset, twenty miles south of Boston, at a salary of seven hundred dollars and a parsonage. Fred commuted into the city for his work at the university. At first he maintained bachelor's hall in the parsonage. Later, Edith was well enough to join him.

To keep up with his studies, Fred frequently followed John Wesley's advice to the letter, rising at four to study by lamp light. In addition to his courses at Boston University, he was attending lectures by Josiah Royce and William James at Harvard. Bowne had become not only his teacher but his friend and he used to come out to spend the day with Fred, sailing across Boston Harbor on one of the old Nantasket boats. Fred met him with a horse and buggy to drive him over to the North Cohasset parsonage, and Bowne never dreamed how Fred had to juggle his budget to pay the bill at the livery stable. It was more than worth while to Fred, however, and he felt that he learned more in their long dis-

cussions sitting in the sand, looking out to sea than he did in the classroom.

Boston Parish

After eight months in North Cohasset, Fred was approached by members of the congregation of the First Church, Boston, as to the possibility of his coming to them. Dr. Franklin Hamilton had recently left the First Church to become president of the American University in Washington, D.C.

When the Bishop of the New England Southern Conference heard of this request from the laymen, he issued an emphatic veto. It was too sudden a jump, the Bishop said, to take a young fellow twenty-five years old from a seven-hundred-a-year church and put him into this important city pulpit. Not many years earlier Franklin Hamilton's brother, Bishop John W. Hamilton, had left that very church to enter the episcopacy. Wasn't this young man a missionary from India and a student? How could he assume responsibility for such an important church, carry on his graduate work, and in addition, make addresses all over New England as he seemed to be doing?

"I tell you, gentlemen," the Bishop ultimatumed to the First Church committee, "I will not appoint this young man to your church!"

When Fred heard this, he went straight to the Bishop, and told him that he had been in no way involved in the matter. He had preached at First Church once. This invitation had followed. That was all he knew about it.

"And, Bishop," he concluded, "I'd like to have you witness this note I have written, saying that I do not wish to go to First Church and that I prefer not to have the matter come before the cabinet!"

The Bishop gulped and sighed, but the upshot of the mat-

ter was that the young man was called to the First Church, Temple Street, Boston, anyhow.

Foreign travel, the challenge of India's centuries-old culture, his own conscientious efforts to fulfill his responsibilities had matured Fred far beyond his years. He was ready for the larger task which this Boston church offered. Young men from the Theological School surrounded him, and they, in turn, attracted others. It became a church of youth. In the background, the body of substantial older laymen, men of position, backed their young minister unstintingly.

Ironically, the parish reminded Fred of Agra. It offered similar contrasts. Struggling new Americans were moving in on the back slopes of Beacon Hill, they had large families and they needed coal and jobs all the time. The older churchmen, learning of their needs from the young minister, undertook to provide for them. They even created trust funds so that their help might continue to be given in perpetuity.

Ordinary walls and conventions never confined Fred Fisher. He walked through or around them or perhaps, most often, knocked them down. Established in his new pastorate in Boston, he immediately sought the acquaintance of his fellow-ministers. His nearest neighbor happened to be a Unitarian. Soon the two men were exchanging pulpits, which so surprised the West End that the *Boston Transcript* commented.

While clubs and conferences, over their cold ham and lobster salad, are talking about cooperation, certain modest level-headed men and women, without any fuss and feathers, are going ahead and realizing it. Consider, for example, the existing cooperation among Protestants of the West End—that field which to persons of a pessimistic disposition seems almost hopeless. Dr. C. R. Eliot, the pastor of the Bulfinch Place Unitarian Church, and Mr. Fisher, the pastor of Temple Street Methodist Church, have recently exchanged pulpits—an unprecedented thing for this locality.

Fred had novel experiences. In one of his sermons he commented sarcastically on recent press stories about a Boston woman who had just returned from Europe bringing a thirty-thousand-dollar necklace for her dog. Fred described the conditions he found in the West End of Boston, of families so poor they could not even buy enough coal to keep their children warm.

"And in contrast," stormed Fred, letting himself go, "we have here in Boston the disgraceful demonstration of a thirty-thousand-dollar necklace on a thirty-dollar dog, led around the streets by a thirty-cent woman!"

The next day streamer headlines told Boston about Fisher's startling sermon from Beacon Hill. The third day Fred had a caller. "Good afternoon, Mr. Fisher, I am the secretary to Mrs. J., and I have come to demand a written apology for your libellous statement about her in your Sunday sermon." Fred never wrote the apology. Instead he offered to call on Mrs. J. and in the end they became good friends.

Another apple cart of precedent was upset when Fred invited all members of Boston labor unions to attend services in his church on a Sunday in October, 1907. It was the first such invitation ever issued by any church in Boston. The unions responded with enthusiasm. They filled the church and the galleries and stood in the vestibule.

Although for the time being, Fred seemed firmly anchored to his new responsibilities in this Boston pastorate, he had never given up his sense of belonging to the world missionary movement. As soon as he heard of plans for the first world missionary conference which was held in Edinburgh in the summer of 1910, Fred made up his mind that he must attend.

A majority of the delegates were western missionaries. Few nationals represented their countries at that time. A trend towards the development of native leadership to take

charge and build an indigenous movement was apparent, however. Fred responded at once to the justice and appropriateness of this effort, and considered this the important contribution of the first world conference. He appreciated besides the opportunity to meet the leaders of religious and missionary work from the entire world.

At the end of three years in his Boston pulpit, Fred had accomplished a good deal. He had finished his graduate work and had secured an S. T. B. at Boston University. He had paid back the money borrowed from Mr. Johnson in Muncie. He had bought a country place in Hingham, Massachusetts, which was to serve as home base for rest and refreshment through all the years of world wandering that followed. Here he was to bring men he had known in the foreign field, Bashford of China, Oldham of India and unnumbered Indian and Chinese friends. On the rocky ledges and under the trees they thrashed out their problems. In the comfortable, lived-in rooms of Pilgrimthorpe still remain many of the treasures he brought from the four corners of the earth.

His Hobby

Here his collection of walking sticks reached interesting proportions. He had begun to collect them as a boy. On his way to Asbury College, he had stopped off at Indianapolis and, to symbolize his arrival at man's estate, had bought his first cane. To his chagrin, both his classmates and his family had laughed at him and called him a dude. This was all he needed to become a champion of walking sticks. He determined to collect one from the capital of every state in the Union, having accidentally begun with the capital of his own state.

Through the years, as his collection grew, he instituted strict rules of admission.

"I like my sticks, they are more than a hobby with me,"

he used to say. "I won't have one from a place I have not visited, nor from a person in whom I have no interest. I don't trade with other collectors, nor buy from curio shops, nor write and have them sent to me. I go after them. Each stick represents a personal experience. Each one tells a story. They are part of my life."

Fred liked the symbolism of the stick. For him it represented the story of civilization. From the time man first broke a branch from a tree and used it to defend himself, they have been inseparably connected with the development of mankind. "They are truly the staff of life," he explained. "They offer support, protection, companionship. They are symbols of prestige and power."

In the end he had three hundred and fifty canes in his collection, plain, elaborately carved and ornamented, instruments of torture and death, simple sticks rich in historical associations. He had the famous cane that Andrew Jackson carried when he stamped across a Washington lawn to end an argument as to where the U. S. Treasury should be built.

"We'll put 'er here," shouted Old Hickory, and plunged his heavy, twisted hickory stick into the ground. And there she was built. People wonder, on visiting Washington why the Treasury stands out of line with the other buildings and with the streets. It was Old Hickory's cane, the first big stick in American politics that was responsible. It came to Fred through a connection of his wife, Edith Jackson's family.

The small, ivory-headed Malacca carried by Daniel Webster was given Fred by Webster's niece. The stout Hoosier hickory, carried by James Whitcomb Riley for many years, came to Fred from Kin Hubbard, the cartoonist. A bit of ash from the campus of Oxford University in England was carried all over India by Rudyard Kipling who eventually gave it to Fred. He had another Kipling stick, the one described in the story of "The Overland Mail." The metal catalpa

beans that jangled from the head of this bamboo staff beat a rhythm that helps the dispatch carrier as he runs, mile after mile, across the dusty roads of India.

A piece of sandalwood, elaborately carved, still fragrant after thirty-five years, was given Fred by the old Maharajah of Mysore. A fine bamboo voodoo stick has three indentations on each side of the root head. These markings are rare and represent the Hindu trinity. A curio stick from Belgium was made from a Brussels sprouts stalk, bent and carved into a tough-ribbed cane.

Fred classified his collection in six groups. They were interesting for: (1) historical associations, (2) gadgets and novelties, (3) workmanship and different woods and materials, (4) they had been carried by famous people, (5) the pilgrim sticks and (6) the sticks from personalities, ranging from a cane given Fred by Lord Reading, Viceroy of India, who used to take long walks with him in Simla, to staffs given him by African chieftains on the Zambesi River.

By the end of his three years at the Boston First Church, Edith had recovered her health, and the young couple were ready to return to India. Where life would have led Fred if he had gone back at that time one can only wonder.

He Reaches New York

Instead, in 1910, he was invited to join the staff of the Board of Foreign Missions. Dr. A. B. Leonard was Corresponding Secretary at the time, and Dr. Homer Stuntz his first assistant. Fred was invited to join them in the New York office as Field Secretary. This would mean virtually giving up preaching, and his friend Bowne opposed the idea.

"Just when you are learning how to preach!" he told Fred, "and when big important churches are offering you summer work, and a limitless road lies before you, you must not throw it all away."

Although Fred could not realize it at the time, these years in the Boston pulpit were preparing him directly for the larger field of work in New York. In Temple Street he had dealt with all classes, foreign-born Americans and *Mayflower* descendants, labor unions and employers. Whether Fred was in Kokomo, Agra, Boston, or New York, his theme was always the same. Like Phillips Brooks, he had but one sermon.

The notes for "The Way to Win" were written here in Boston and in a way this first book epitomizes his own life. His four main points were:

To win men to Christ.

To make men like Christ.

To draw men together in Christ.

To send men out for Christ.

Fred came to the conclusion that he could do more for India by interpreting its needs here in America than by staying put in any one spot in that vast country.

This next period of his life, 1910-20, plunged Fred into "the heart of more conventions than any other man in Methodism," as the *Advocate* phrased it. The Board of Foreign Missions assigned him to the Laymen's Missionary Movement of the Methodist Episcopal Church as its executive secretary. It was his responsibility to call the attention of American Methodism to the convention which was to meet in Indianapolis in 1913. Fred went back and forth across the continent, talking in churches, organizing groups of boosters, carrying over into church work the folksy promotion methods used by business men in Rotary and Kiwanis. With his friendly, unassuming ways, his ready laughter, his gift for reaching the hearts of his listeners, Fred made lifelong friends wherever he went, and was soon known from coast to coast as a rising figure. Resourcefulness was an important

element in his success. If an object could not be achieved in one way, Fred would work out some other method of accomplishing the same end. He even mortgaged his home in Hingham to supply needed funds for promotion when appropriations were not available. Money was always something to be used, not hoarded, for Fred.

The Indianapolis Convention was an unprecedented success. It was a landmark in Methodist history. Three thousand laymen attended and they gave \$50,000 for missions, a vast sum in those days. The distinctive achievement of this convention, however, was that it planted the seeds of the Centenary movement which, a few years later, raised the astronomical sum of \$105,000,000 for Methodist missions throughout the world.

Three leading Methodists, David G. Downey, E. W. Halford, and Ralph Welles Keeler, published the official account of this convention, called "Militant Methodism." Describing Fred's contribution to the work, they said:

"But the head and directing genius of the efforts which brought together this great body of men was Fred B. Fisher, General Secretary of the Laymen's Missionary Movement of the Methodist Episcopal Church. It was his boundless faith and tireless labors which made possible this new landmark in Methodist history. In New York, he was assisted by a Convention Committee composed of S. Earl Taylor, James R. Joy, E. W. Halford, J. Edgar Leaycraft, Frank A. Horne, and Ralph Welles Keeler, while his local force at Indianapolis was generated by Hon. Charles Warren Fairbanks and Bishop David H. Moore, Co-Chairman of the Local Convention Committee."

Close upon the heels of the Indianapolis Convention and its spectacular success, Fred was loaned to the Interdenominational Laymen's Missionary Movement, working with J. Campbell White. A year later, in 1917, he was selected to

organize in his own church a campaign to raise one million dollars for the Indian Mass Movement.

This was the first effort of Protestant laymen to raise so large a sum for a special group. Fred was deeply stirred that he should so soon be called upon to devote his efforts in this larger sphere to the cause of India. He felt that the wisdom of his course in determining to remain in this country was more than justified.

It was a full decade since he and Edith had returned to this country because of her illness. Before undertaking this ambitious new program, he must renew his contacts with India. He must see for himself what had been happening in his absence. He must draw fresh inspiration for this new effort. In 1917, before opening the campaign, Fred and Edith returned to India.

These were years of unbounded activity. Fred gave himself with a whole-hearted devotion that swept away all obstacles. He accepted the recognition and rewards modestly, but they could not fail to be heartwarming to the young man who so recently had been pastor of a little mission church in Kokomo, Indiana, at a salary of three hundred and sixty dollars a year.

CHAPTER V

INDIA AFTER TEN YEARS

Fred had been away from India for a decade—not long in a country whose memory reaches back four thousand years. And yet, even in this land of immemorial traditions, a good deal of water had flowed under the bridge.

Looking back, Fred has described the India of his early days in Agra as a patient, easy-going country, slumbering peacefully under the mango trees at noon.

Volcanoes simmered just beneath the surface, however. Fred and Edith arrived in India in mid-1904. In 1905 Japan defeated Russia on land and sea, the first victory of a major Asiatic country over a major western power. Fred was early aware of the fateful significance of that victory. On page one of his book, "India's Silent Revolution" occurs this statement:

Since 1905 there has been an embryonic Pan-Asia which could easily assume formidable proportions . . . the aggressiveness of the Japanese gives the traveler a vivid consciousness of such a possibility.

Japan in Sheep's Clothing

It was necessary to wait for Pearl Harbor twenty-two years later to waken Fred's countrymen to a realization of what he clearly foresaw when this book was published in 1919. After a reference to Japan's victory over Russia, the book continued:

Japan is recognized as the moving spirit in any Pan-Asia movement. She took the occasion of the war (World War I) to seize German territory in China. For this she has been both criticized and

praised, according to the viewpoint of the observer. It amounts to the same thing whether we accept Japan's Twenty-one Demands as a sincere effort to work out a Japanese Monroe Doctrine which should protect China from the aggression of the western world, or whether we believe that Japan is scheming to control China as a first step in a vast imperialistic dream. The Pan-Asia movement has grave significance in either case.¹

Fred had no illusions about Japan. The statement diplomatically presents alternatives for our consideration, but the facts are there—"scheming to control China in a vast imperialistic dream." With the hindsight of today we could scarcely improve this statement of twenty-two years ago and the sinister ring of that final warning, "The Pan-Asia movement has grave significance in either case."

The year 1905 marked the beginning of widespread nationalist activity. Fred related it in part to Japan's defeat of Russia. There was, he said, a new hope stirring in the orient. In large part, however, the disturbances were due to resentments stored up during the administration of that competent but uniquely unpopular Viceroy, Lord Curzon. Fred arrived in time to witness the pomp and magnificence of his viceregal court, which outshone Buckingham Palace and to see the queenly beauty and dignity of his American-born wife, Nancy Leiter, daughter of a Chicago meat-packer multi-millionaire.

Partition of Bengal

As a parting salute, to punish Hindu rebelliousness, and at the same time to build up the Mahomedan twenty per cent of the population as a more powerful minority group, the Viceroy moved the capital of India from Calcutta in the Hindu province of Bengal, to Delhi, historic capital of the Moghul Empire. It was a flattering gesture that gave pleasure to every Mahomedan in the world.

¹ *India's Silent Revolution*, pp. 1-2.

At the same time Lord Curzon decreed the partition of Bengal, slicing in two this literate, aggressive, and discontented province. The new province of eastern Bengal gave the Muslims a clear majority, and subjected the Hindu Bengalis to Muslim control. This was one of the most unpopular moves ever made by the British Raj. The new Viceroy, Lord Minto, inherited a whirlwind of bombings and assassinations, which were just gaining momentum when Fred and Edith had to return to the United States. For six years India seethed with rebellion. Finally in 1911, on the succession of King George, the Raj reversed itself, and as a coronation concession restored Bengal to one province. By that time, however, the fires of discontent had spread so far that not even the reversal could restore the *status quo*.

During the years that Fred was at the Boston church he kept in touch with spectacular happenings in India. He had known R. G. Tilak, the brilliant Hindu leader, who in 1908 was sentenced to a six-year term in prison, and he pondered the significance of Tilak's being, not a Bengali, but a Poona Brahman from southwestern India, the opposite side of the continent. He realized that the rebellion had spread across the entire country.

In 1909 came the memorable Morely-Minto Reforms which first introduced communal representation. This gave the various minorities in India separate electorates and the privilege of nominating and voting for candidates of their own faith at the general elections. Fred used to say that a comparable concession in this country would permit adherents of all our various faiths to nominate and elect their own separate officials within our city and state governments. Whatever Lord Minto's motives may have been, and this is a controversial question, the reforms have admittedly served to deepen the antagonism and promote violence between the

Hindu and Muslim communities, and the situation has grown steadily worse since their passage.

World War I served to divert both sides from this complicated and unhappy situation. All India, from Maharajahs to outcastes, rose to meet the Empire's need. Money, supplies, and men were volunteered in abundance.

The war had more than a year to go when Fred returned to India in the autumn of 1917. Public interest was focussed on two figures, both English, a man and a woman, representing opposite extremes of English policy in India.

The woman was Annie Besant, leader of the esoteric group of Theosophists who made their world headquarters at Adyar near Madras. Fred remembered meeting her when he was travelling about India with the American professors in 1906. She was a person one did not forget. He had heard lurid stories of her predecessor, Mme. Blavatsky, and of the Theosophists' earlier controversy with the missionaries in southern India. That was all too far in the past to bother about. He had been impressed with Mrs. Besant's genuine enthusiasm for Hindu culture, her instinctive political sense, her gift of oratory, her qualities of leadership. He was intrigued by her picturesque background. Brought up as a sheltered English girl in the heart of repressed, Victorian England, she had escaped from her husband's Church of England rectory in a remote Yorkshire village to serve successively as editor and promoter for Bradlaugh, the atheist lecturer; as an associate of Bernard Shaw, Sidney Webb, and the Fabian Socialists; and, finally, as a successor to Mme. Blavatsky, strange Russian mystic who claimed supernatural powers, as head of the Theosophists.

During the winter of 1916, in association with B. G. Tilak, she had drawn up a program of constitutional reforms, and it was her enthusiasm which had helped to revive the importance

of the Indian National Congress, an annual gathering of Hindu and Muslim delegates from all over India to discuss political reforms and a greater measure of self-government.

The new Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, interned Mrs. Besant for seditious utterances, from June until September of 1917, thereby conferring upon her the halo of martyrdom. Fred attended the winter meeting of the Congress and watched with interest the tremendous ovation she received. It made a dramatic picture—the great tent, or pandal, with hundreds of delegates sitting cross-legged on the matting floor, their many-colored turbans looking like a huge flower garden. On a high rostrum stood Annie Besant, a tall, stately, white-haired woman, wearing the graceful draped sari of India, swaying her audience to heights of enthusiasm by her skilful oratory. And Fred watched incredulously when these Indian men, who kept their own women hidden behind thick walls and purdahs, paid this brilliant Englishwoman the extraordinary tribute of bestowing upon her the greatest honor in their gift—they elected her President of their Congress for the ensuing year.

He Meets Montagu

The other figure in the public eye, the Englishman, was an official representative of the British Raj. Mr. Montagu, newly appointed Secretary of State for India, landed in Bombay shortly after Fred did. He had received his appointment in recognition of a series of challenging speeches in the House of Commons the previous summer, in which he had demanded adequate recognition by the British Raj of India's loyal war assistance. India hoped that the recognition would take the form of substantial concessions towards dominion status.

Mr. Montagu arrived with a retinue of experts and toured the principal cities, receiving deputations, endeavoring to ascertain all shades of opinion. Fred was one of those who had long interviews with Mr. Montagu. He was impressed

with the earnestness and sincerity of the man, but not too hopeful of the outcome. After all, the most concrete statement that the Indians had been given so far was a curiously vague phrase from one of Mr. Montagu's speeches. The Indians pinned their hopes upon it, and the phrase was on every tongue. The policy of His Majesty's Government was to be—"the gradual development of self-governing institutions . . . progressive realization of responsible government of India." How gradual? That was the question.

Fred was on the alert for evidences of the influence of the war in this old country, so resistant to change. India had furnished more than a million men to the Allied armies. Already the wounded were trickling back home, carrying into their remote villages a wealth of new experiences. They had been nursed in war hospitals by Red Cross women nurses. Even in their camp life, moving about in France and Belgium, they had observed at first-hand something of the advantages of European culture—the power of education, the importance of machinery, the value of sanitation and hygiene in the administration of their camps.

Travelling through the Punjab villages in the spring, Fred stumbled upon an incident which seemed to typify the war's effects. He used the story on his return to the United States, and I have found it as he told it in the notes for his speeches:

"In the heart of the Punjab, one thousand miles north of Bombay and Calcutta, we came into a village and saw that something unusual was taking place. We found all the people ranged around three sides of the square that makes the village green. Facing them stood two young men in uniform, Indian soldiers who had been boys in this village, and who were now back from the front, invalided home. One had a pointer and was drawing lines in the sand as he explained where France lay in relation to India; how he had sailed for many days to get there, where Germany lay in relation to France,

England, and America. He told them of Paris, of street cars, automobiles, the high buildings, the women's dresses, the furniture in restaurants, the food, and how it was served at high tables, the people sitting on chairs. In other words, he was bringing the West to the East.

"He told a story of what may happen to caste in the trenches that must have been a revelation to his audience. One day the cook for a group of Brahman soldiers was killed; almost as a matter of course, a low caste took his place. Sometimes in the emergencies of war the castes had all eaten together—a defiance of their most rigid code which would normally call for excommunication of the whole group.

"This new sense of world citizenship, as well as citizenship in the British Empire is an important product of the Indian soldier's experience, and will find its way into the transformed life of a new India."

Fred was interested, too, to observe that none of that village crowd paid any attention to him. Ordinarily when a white man enters a village, he is the center of interest. Everyone watches him anxiously. Is he going to collect taxes? Or is he a judge come to punish them—and for what? On this day, Fred and his party sat down at one side of the square and joined the listening group practically unnoticed. The villagers were absorbed in the two brothers who, a little while ago, had been ordinary village boys like all the rest. Now they had come home with the most amazing story ever heard in that village.

The new wave of nationalism, new personalities, the influence and example of western civilization as carried back by returning soldiers—Fred analyzed and listed these items in his notebooks, and later these notes were to result in the book, published by Macmillan in 1919, *India's Silent Revolution*. Gradually he came to feel that the most important

thing that had happened to India during that decade was the emergence of Gandhi.

He Meets Gandhi

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in 1869. His grandfather and two uncles were successively prime ministers of the state of Porbandar in western India; his father chancellor of the exchequer in a neighboring state. As a young man, he defied orthodox prejudices against foreign travel and went to London where he studied law, passed the examinations with honor and was admitted to the bar.

Circumstances led him to open an office in South Africa where he built up a most successful practice, said to have been worth thirty thousand dollars a year at its height. Gandhi returned to India in 1914. He was known to a limited circle as a brilliant lawyer and an impassioned defender of the rights of Indian indentured labor in South Africa.

"By 1917," writes Kate Mitchell, "his word had spread over India and he was already known as the Mahatma (Great Soul), a title which appears to have been spontaneously bestowed upon him by his followers."²

Fred first saw Gandhi on a train journey from Madras to Calcutta in 1917. He described that trip in his book *That Strange Little Brown Man Gandhi*.³

"Gandhiji! Gandhi the Beloved Mahatma! The Great Soul of India.

"Like the sigh of a great wind this name swept over the white-capped mountains as I rode on the train one day with Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi towards Calcutta. No word of his coming had been allowed over the government-owned wires for fear of an uprising. Yet the curious grapevine teleg-

² *India Without Fable*, p. 156.

³ P. 1.

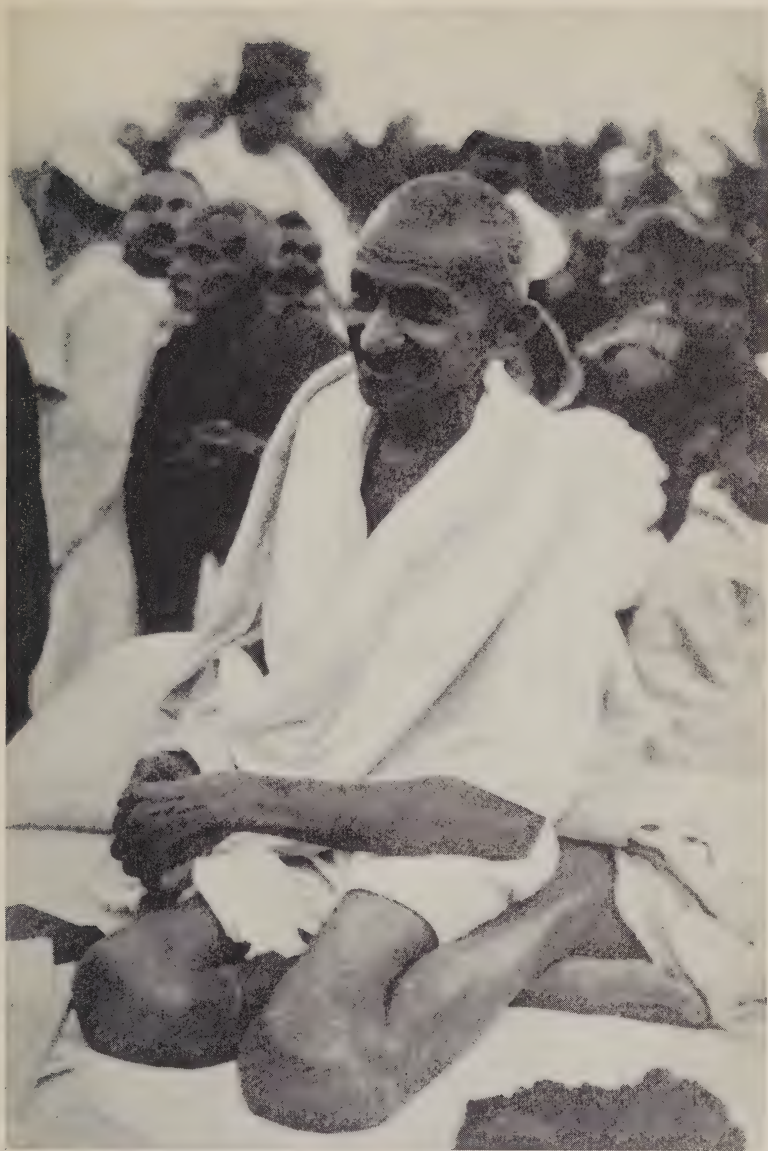
raphy of India, ancient and mysterious, knows no censor. At every station I saw the human seas overflow our train. Ladders of breathing and sobbing bodies were made so that the lucky ones might climb to touch—or merely to see the Mahatma. Rose petals covered our engine. Peasants stopped their bullocks in the fields and bowed in prayer as the holy train swept by. Every pole, fence, and hillock had its burden of worshippers. Why? Not for a little brown man spinning out his day of silence. The soul of India was worshipping not Gandhi, the man, nor merely Gandhi, the patriot, but Gandhi, the Indian ideal—the hero who had turned moral force into a weapon, a weapon at once spiritual and political.”

From the first, Fred believed in the sincerity and leadership of Gandhi. He was to have many meetings and long discussions with him in the years ahead. His notebooks contain frequent references to the Mahatma's doings and sayings and the extraordinary influence he exerted over three hundred and ninety million people.

Looking through the notebooks, Fred's impression of Gandhi might be briefly summarized in this order:

Regardless of minor differences of religious philosophy, Fred looked upon Gandhi as a man of God. Here was a man who had already begun to give one day a week to silent meditation. Fred understood that need. When he was responsible for his big conventions, Fred frequently found it necessary to take an additional, unregistered room at the hotel where he could think things through in solitude. Only so could he clear his mind of confusing details.

Fred considered Gandhi a profoundly idealistic internationalist. He had dedicated himself to self-determination for his own country, but he never lost touch with his international ideals. A believer in the practicability of the brotherhood of man, he established the reality of his belief by taking an out-caste girl into his home and adopting her as his own daughter.



Gandhi, the Beloved Mahatma

Fred trusted Gandhi as a leader because Gandhi could see not only the failings of other nations, but also the sins of Hinduism against the outcastes. Gandhi once said to Fred:

"It is detestable and inconceivable that a religion like Hinduism, which, in the purity of its origin, taught that all life is a part of God, should have descended to the slough of damning sixty million untouchables to an outcaste slavery."

A Human Being

On closer acquaintance, Gandhi fell easily into informal folksy ways. In describing him, Fred used to laugh and say, "How can you help liking a man who remembers to ask about your wife, and teases you for having to take soda mints because you have eaten too much?" And he quoted Gandhi's whimsical comment, "You Americans amuse me. You eat too much, and then in order to correct this, take medicine to get rid of it."

One day after a long discussion of the power of Ahimsa—non-violence, Gandhi looked up at Fred with a mischievous twinkle. Taking hold of Fred's strong, determined chin, he said, "Just think of a man with a chin like yours talking about peace," and he laughed, showing as he did so the gap in his mouth where two front teeth had been knocked out during a riot in the old South African days. Fred could not resist the temptation.

"I told him," said Fred, "that he was a fine pacifist himself, for he was always laughing, and whenever he laughed it showed his missing teeth which made him look as though he had just been in a fight. And what will they think of a pacifist with two front teeth missing?" Gandhi was delighted by this sally and the two men laughed together heartily.

Fred took advantage of the opportunity to suggest that Gandhi come to Calcutta and let Fred take him to an American dentist who would replace the missing teeth. He argued

that it would not only improve Gandhi's appearance, but also his health. Gandhi thought it over for a minute or two and quietly replied:

"You know, Fred, some years ago, I renounced personal money and property, and gave all my earnings to our movement, and when I did that, I began to live on the scale that the poorest of our people must live upon. I have kept my personal expenditures within eleven cents a day. Now, you see, one of our lowly brothers, whom I call Harijans (sons of God), and you call outcastes, could never afford your expert dentists; so even your generous offer I cannot accept, but I deeply thank you."

Gandhi told Fred that he had reached the determination to use Ahimsa—non-violence—as a political weapon in South Africa, but only after he had exhausted every resource afforded him under the constitution. As a lawyer, he knew his constitutional rights under English law, and under international law. When all else failed him, he turned to non-violence, and a fearful weapon it was to prove, the weapon of the terrible meek.

It was also in South Africa that Gandhi determined to abandon wearing his high hat, morning coat, striped trousers and spats which marked the successful lawyer, trained in London's Temple Court and was the symbol too of the constitutional weapons which had proven powerless to help him and his people. Instead he adopted the homespun garments of the poor outcaste. There were headlines in the change, but Fred also sensed its sincerity.

Gandhi's South African experience had made him realize the foolishness of talking about the White Man's Burden as though the brown man too were not struggling under a staggering burden. The poetry has all been written about the White Man's Burden, but Fred took up the song of the Brown Man's Burden and sang it as long as he lived.

CHAPTER VI

THE GO-DEVIL

Most ministers never heard of a "go-devil." Fred Fisher as a boy knew all about them and their explosive force. His first summer job was carrying water to the men working in the gas wells outside of Muncie.

They had a process called "shooting the well." After the drillers had done their work with the derrick and had nearly reached gas, they dropped an explosive into the well. They used a tin tube of nitroglycerine which had a basket handle on top, and a torpedo point underneath. This was the "go-devil." Warning signs around these deadly little instruments read, "Don't touch me; I might go off." Young Fred was fascinated; he liked the thrill of danger that they gave him.

Fred also took care of the foreman's horses. One day when Charlie Talbot the foreman and he were driving home from work, Fred said to the fat old man who spilled over the entire seat:

"I'd like to drop that go-devil some time."

"What?" shot back the big man, who could scarcely see little Fred wedged into a corner.

"Yes," answered Fred, "I can run faster than the men, and the fellow who drops it always has to run way back to the barn."

He was allowed to try, and before long he was dropping all the go-devils.

When I knew him Fred was still using the go-devil as a symbol in his sermons. "I think I've been somewhat of a go-devil myself, ever since," he would say. "I have dropped go-

devils in India and in Africa, and I confess it's been a revealing joy to me to drop go-devils in the midst of society and see whether they would go off. They will. Whenever you put the song of freedom, the ideal of love, and the glory of the Gospel of Christ down into society, they have a strange way of turning things upside down."

The Interchurch Steel Strike Report certainly turned out to be a go-devil. After he had been made director of the Industrial Relations Department of the Interchurch World Movement, Fred told John D. Rockefeller, Jr., that he believed the only thing that qualified him for this work was that in his boyhood days he had dropped go-devils.

Mr. Rockefeller laughed and said, "Be careful whose well you drop them into now!" In reality, it was men like Mr. Rockefeller who stood behind the report and made possible its far-reaching results.

Church Coöperation

The Interchurch World Movement was organized in December, 1918, and was directly related to World War I. Inspired by the capacity of human nature for heroism and self-sacrifice under the stimulus of war, the religious leaders of this country determined to attempt a conscription on behalf of peace, for constructive instead of destructive purposes. They hoped to eliminate unnecessary expense and the duplication and overlapping of denominational activities and to achieve the added power of joint counsels and unified efforts.

The Industrial Relations Department was one of the first projects determined upon and the cabinet asked Fred, who had assisted in drawing up the original program, to become director. The Department came into existence under rather melodramatic conditions, not inappropriate to its later career. The directors of the Interchurch met in Cleveland on May 1, 1919, for an All-board Conference. Leaders of the nation's

business and professional men, scholars and clergy gathered in the hotel towering above the public square in the heart of the city. At the close of the morning session the leaders scattered for luncheon and for a walk in the spring sunshine.

It was the first May Day following the Armistice. The country was just entering upon the disillusioning experience of readjustment after war. Discharged soldiers were learning the bitter difference between pre-war promises and post-war fulfillment. When a Socialist-Labor parade to celebrate May Day turned into the public square, with an ex-soldier in uniform carrying a red flag, a lieutenant on the sidewalk snatched the flag and trampled it. In an instant the square was a rioting mob. Reserves were called out. Mounted police charged the crowd, army tanks and trucks thundered through the streets. Before it was over one man was dead and two hundred injured, including two of the Interchurch officials who had been swept along by the crowd.

Long past the appointed hour for their afternoon session, the Interchurch room stood empty. The officials could not make their way back through the rioting mob. It was a grim and sobering experience. This brutal conflict had intruded itself almost into their conference room. They had heard that ugly sound which no one ever forgets, the dull impact of police clubs on human flesh. They could not forget the white, set faces of the paraders, the rearing horses of the mounted police, their flailing arms as they plowed through their task.

Director of Industrial Relations

The creation of an Industrial Relations Department had been down on the afternoon's agenda. This interlude raised the matter from a routine item to one of dramatic urgency. Fred undertook his task with characteristic energy. During the summer he held a series of conferences bringing together for face-to-face discussions all shades of industrial opinion

from large employers of labor to the leaders of radical labor unions, and including economists, sociologists, engineers. Some of the conferences met in a private dining room of the Brevoort Hotel, New York City, where they argued until late into the night.

At the September meeting of the Interchurch Cabinet, Fred made his recommendations for the department program. He proposed six divisions including a Division for Participation in Management and Industrial Disputes which would "make first-hand studies of industrial disputes and render whatever service possible; study and catalogue causes of suppression of free speech; furnish such oppressed groups place and opportunity for free discussion of any and all affairs short of violence, etc."

Within a fortnight Fred's fledgling department faced a supreme challenge. On September 22nd the steel strike broke. The size and importance of the industry, the number of workers, and the basic questions involved—the twelve-hour versus eight-hour day and collective bargaining—made this a formidable situation. Fred acted energetically and decisively.

He dispatched two trained investigators to Pittsburgh, and he called a National Industrial Conference to meet at the Hotel Pennsylvania, in New York City, October 2nd and 3rd. As in the case of all his summer conferences, invitations were evenly divided between representatives of employers, employees, and the public. The investigators, after observing the first week of the strike, reported to the Conference on the conditions apparent at that early stage: unfairness of the Pittsburgh press, suppression of free speech in a general refusal of local authorities to permit strikers to hold meetings in steel towns; cases of police brutality, etc. These charges were later substantiated and documented in the Steel Strike Report.

John W. Glenn, Director of the Russell Sage Foundation,

proposed the resolution calling for an investigation of the steel strike by the Industrial Relations Department. Dr. Jeremiah W. Jenks of New York University, who was to become a semi-official apologist for the Steel Corporation, took part in the discussion.

Filed away in the archives of the New York Public Library are two thick volumes of typewritten pages, minutes of the Interchurch committee meetings and resolutions. Pasted inside the front cover is a card, "Presented by Raymond B. Fosdick, December 27, 1924." By that time the Movement was dead. But these minutes form a valuable official memento of a gallant adventure in idealism.

Having outlined a comprehensive program of research, Fred recommended sending four representatives to Europe to "make an investigation concerning the background of American immigrant labor." Fred sailed for England in the early autumn, accompanied by Dr. Tippy and Messrs. McGill and Gold.

Before leaving for Europe, Fred had the machinery of the steel strike investigation well under way. He had recommended that because of the gravity and scope of the investigation, it should be entrusted to an independent Commission of Inquiry, composed of clergy and church representatives rather than of technical experts and economists "because, by the terms of the resolution creating it (the Commission), it was to treat of the moral rather than the economic situation involved." Fred asked Bishop Francis J. McConnell to serve as Chairman of the Commission and Dr. Daniel A. Poling as Vice-Chairman. The other members of the Commission represented the various denominations: Mrs. Fred Smith Bennett, Presbyterian; George W. Coleman, Baptist; Alva W. Taylor, Disciples; John McDowell, Presbyterian; Nicholas Van der Pyl, Congregationalist; and as Advisory Members, Bishop William Melvin Bell, United Brethren; Bishop

Charles D. Williams, Protestant Episcopal. It was ordered that the report when completed be submitted to the Executive Committee of the Interchurch World Movement.

For the technical work of the investigation, Fred secured the services of the Bureau of Industrial Relations of New York City. He appointed Robert Bruère, Head of this Bureau, as Director of Research, and Heber Blankenhorn, of the same Bureau, as Secretary to the Commission of Inquiry. Mr. Blankenhorn's past experience as city editor of the *New York Evening Sun*, and during the war, as captain in charge of anti-German propaganda at G.H.Q. in France gave him a valuable background for the task of writing the steel strike report.

Three months after the close of the field investigation, the Commission presented its findings. They were unanimously adopted by the Executive Committee of the Interchurch who voted to give the report immediate publicity and publish it in book form. President Wilson received his copy of the Steel Strike Report in the White House on July 27, 1920, and the next day it was released to the press.

A letter accompanying the Report signed by Bishop Francis J. McConnell, Chairman, and Dr. Daniel Poling, Vice-Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry, read in part:

"The Commission finds in the iron and steel industry conditions which it is forced to describe as not good for the nation.

"The conviction has grown upon this Commission that it should not fail to recommend a practical suggestion of peace for an industry drifting toward unrestricted warfare. As Christians we can do no other."

The year following the publication of their original Report, the Commission of Inquiry issued a second supplementary volume. A long section was devoted to the undercover men who frequently turn into *agents provocateurs* in order

to insure continuance of their jobs of spying on the workers. Renewed publicity attended the Commission's resourceful action in January, 1921, when they reopened the whole question by presenting a Memorial to Congress.

At a joint meeting of the Taylor Society, sections of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers during the winter following the Inquiry, Horace B. Drury, the economist, presented to an approving audience a detailed comparison of the effects on efficiency, morale, and output of the twelve-hour versus the eight-hour day. In so far as they cover the same ground, the engineers' report strikingly supplements that of the Interchurch World Movement, and is entitled to share the credit for the Steel Corporation's abolition of the twelve-hour day a few years later.

The Industry Strikes Back

The inquiry functioned so effectively that almost at once it called forth active opposition. One of the earliest attacks upon it was a circular sent out on the letterhead of the Ohio Manufacturers Association in early December, entitled "The Anarchists and the Interchurch World Movement." It was based on an anonymous undercover report first circulated in United States Steel Corporation plants. It declared that the Bolsheviks (!) had taken over the Interchurch and were using it for their own purposes.

Numerous similar attacks attempted to undermine the Inquiry in advance by discrediting the personnel of the Commission and of the Industrial Relations Department. For weeks detectives and spies shadowed everybody connected with the Inquiry. They obtained interviews with Fred and the others and tried to draw them into indiscreet statements. They planted a spy in Fred's office and ransacked his files. Unable to find material for legitimate attack, they drew on

their grotesque detective imaginations. They asserted that Fred Fisher had only recently dropped the *c* from his name, which should be Fischer, and that he was secretly a pro-German—an embarrassing accusation in 1919. Another and more elaborate attack, financed by the Steel Corporation, analyzed Fred. It vaguely asserted that some of his associates had called him a radical. He was also accused of showing “a strong trend toward mysticism,” though what mysticism had to do with Bolshevism they did not explain.

Fred brought these attacks of the Ohio Manufacturers Association to the official attention of the Interchurch at their Atlantic City Conference early in January, 1920. A special committee was appointed to investigate the matter, including John D. Rockefeller, Jr., James W. Kinnear of Pittsburgh, George J. Ramsey of Raleigh, N.C., G. M. Rodefer of Bellair, Ohio, and David W. Teachout, Chairman. The formidable importance of the names on this committee played its part and the Secretary of the Ohio Manufacturers Association made abject apology, accepting the committee’s denial of his charges, and not only withdrawing his previous assertions, but also regretting “making any misstatements, or doing injustice to anyone.”

Detectives on His Trail

It was startling to Fred to discover that resentment of the part he played in initiating this Steel Strike Report was to follow him halfway round the world and dog his footsteps in India. Evidently warned by some agency of the powerful financial interests he had offended, the Criminal Investigation Department (corresponding to our F.B.I.) set detectives on his trail to listen to his speeches and sermons after he had become bishop and returned to the orient. He had a revealing experience in connection with this espionage.

One Monday morning, a year after the Steel Strike Re-

port was published, Fred was in his study in Calcutta when a young Englishman was announced by the Indian house boy. While shaking hands Fred thought his face seemed familiar and asked:

"Where have I met you before?"

"I do not think you have met me before, sir," replied the young man, "but it may be you have seen me, for I have heard every sermon you have preached and every lecture you have given during the last six months!"

"What has occasioned such faithfulness on your part? It sounds almost too flattering."

"It has been no hardship to hear these sermons." The young man seemed embarrassed. "Last night when you talked on motherhood, I felt like a beastly cad, and I decided to come this morning and make a clean breast of the whole thing. You see, Bishop, I am a member of the C.I.D. and this has been on the books against you." He put on Fred's desk the following:

In the confidential report of the C.I.D. dated January 14, 1921, it is considered that Bishop Fisher of Thoburn Methodist Episcopal Church, is a most dangerous Bolshevik, and was sent to this country under an American passport under the guise of a Bishop to carry on his teaching. His movements are being watched.

"I should be grateful," the Englishman said, "if, before you make this known, you wait until I have returned to England, which will be soon. I have been so moved by your sermons, Bishop, that I want to get out of this damnable business of spying on men like you."

The young man left the paper in trust with the Bishop. After the C.I.D. agent had left the country, Fred took the matter up with the Hon. Alexander Weddell, American Consul-General, who, in turn, took it up with the Viceroy of India. The Viceroy, Lord Reading, perhaps partly by way

of making amends, invited Fred to visit him in Simla, where they talked it all over. When Fred came to leave, the Viceroy, having learned of his collection of walking sticks, presented Fred with his own stick which he—the Viceroy—had used on their walks together!

Not only was the charge against Fred erased from the books of the C.I.D., but it was traced to the men so incensed over the achievement of the Steel Strike Report that they wanted to strike back at Fred. Obviously the steel magnates would not welcome being forced to reduce their employees' day from twelve to eight hours, but one would scarcely expect them to drag their revenge clear across the world!

Hero of Romance

A pleasanter by-product of Fred's connection with the Steel Strike Report came to him at the hands of Dr. Daniel Poling who had served as Vice-Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry. Shortly after the strike, Dr. Poling wrote a novel, *The Furnace* (Doran, 1925). The plot revolved around a great strike in the Pennsylvania steel mills, and the effort of the Industrial Bureau of a United World Movement to help settle the strike. The story was a thinly disguised account of events connected with the Interchurch Steel Strike Report. It was generally understood that Bruce Jayne, hero of Dr. Poling's novel, represented Fred in his capacity as Director of the Industrial Relations Department. This gives special interest to comments on Bruce Jayne, made by a man who was intimately associated with Fred throughout the life of the Interchurch World Movement. Dr. Poling wrote:

"He (Bruce Jayne—Fred Fisher) was not selected to direct the activities of the Industrial Department of the organization because he was a radical . . . physically and morally a progressive, politically he was a progressive, but in vital

particulars of his personal faith, and in Americanism he was soundly conservative.

"Bruce Jayne has done a lot for us, and we've got to stand by him. Why, he's as brave—or as crazy—as a man going into a den of wildcats with a nut cracker. . . .

"Bruce Jayne had become convinced that the nation was suffering from a great internal sickness. . . . So, in the name of the church, he set up the clinic, with at least a half notion that the remedy must finally be spiritual. . . ."

The literature called forth by the Steel Inquiry furnishes excellent internal evidence of its importance. A majority of the titles indexed under Interchurch World Movement in the New York Public Library catalogue are attacks on the Steel Strike Report, most of them financed by the Steel Corporation. One of the earliest, published in 1920, was a pamphlet written by a clergyman from a small town in Massachusetts. The shrewd financiers of the Steel Corporation thought it worth while to circulate 1,200,000 copies of this pamphlet. A year later, the clergyman wrote a second attack which contained one amusing story. He told of having a copy of the first pamphlet returned to him with the marginal comment:

"The Steel Corporation will find a minister to defend it, even if they have to go to hell to get him."

The most elaborate attack and by implication most flattering to the Interchurch appeared in 1923. It offered four hundred and seventy-five pages of fine-tooth combing from every possible angle as against two hundred and fifty-one pages in the Report itself. The book, "An Analysis of the Interchurch World Movement Report on the Steel Strike," by Marshall Olds, was bolstered up by a foreword by Professor Jeremiah W. Jenks of New York University, certificates of accuracy by Haskins and Sells, C.P.A., and an endorsement by a legal adviser.

More Detectives

A large part of the book was based on detectives' reports on the personnel of the Commission's field investigators and included an attack on Dr. Fisher, as head of the Industrial Relations Department which authorized the Inquiry. The effort of all these attacks was to show that the men involved were radicals who did not fairly represent the responsible leaders of the Interchurch. But they had to be careful and work by innuendo. That first brush, in which the Secretary of the Ohio Manufacturers Association had been forced to retract and apologize, had taught them that men like John D. Rockefeller, Jr., stood solidly behind the Industrial Relations Department. They recognized the danger of publicly libeling this group and were forced to resort to more confidential channels.

A voluminous secret literature on the Inquiry and its creators is gathering dust in files scattered over the country. It consists of under-cover reports, furnished by detective agencies. These agencies masqueraded under innocuous titles and printed phrases on their letterheads about their purpose "to render service in better industrial relationships." They furnished the data on which the public attacks were based, but being confidential and privately circulated, they did not have to bother so much about accuracy and the dangers of libel. These detective reports were circulated so freely among the subsidiaries of the steel companies that the executives passed them about quite carelessly, in some cases even turning them over to the Commission's own investigators.

The Report received not only nation-wide, but world-wide publicity. Most newspapers in this country and many abroad, all the large news agencies and many periodicals carried long quotations and editorials.

The *New York Tribune* commented, "The report of the

Interchurch Commission, composed of men whose good faith will not be questioned, concerning conditions in the steel industry is such as to require the Steel Corporation either to refute the charges or to change its policies." (July 29, 1920.)

The *Manchester Guardian* paid tribute to "this report of the churchmen of America" in an editorial entitled "A Fearless Inquiry":

"The struggle to establish collective bargaining in the steel industry is by far the greatest industrial conflict of this generation in America. The policy of Judge Gary is reactionary beyond the understanding of British manufacturers. All students of American labor conditions would agree that what is known as Garyism is the greatest breeder of disorder in American life today. This report of the churchmen sustains the belief with overwhelming detail."

Prize Wheeze

Will Rogers commented on the issues involved in his own breezy fashion, summing it all up in a nice blend of satire and indignation:

"We can always depend on Judge Gary for a weekly laugh in his speeches. But last week he had the prize wheeze of his career. He had his accomplices make an investigation of the Steel Industry, and they turned in a report that it was much more beneficial to a man to work twelve hours than eight. They made this report so alluring that it is apt to make the people who read it decide to stay the extra four hours on their jobs, just through the health and enjoyment they get out of it. I never knew steel work was so easy till I read that report. But here is the kick. Judge Gary got up to read this report before the stockholders. He read for one hour in favor of a twelve-hour day. Then he was so exhausted they had to carry him out." ¹

¹ From *Will Rogers* by Betty Blake Rogers. Copyright 1941. Used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs Merrill Company.

The steel companies themselves raised an imperishable and shining monument to the Report when, in 1923, the Iron and Steel Institute promised President Harding on behalf of their entire industry to shift to the eight-hour day as soon as labor conditions permitted. Mr. Gary had himself testified before the Senate Inquiry in 1919 that in his plants alone, 69,000 men worked the twelve-hour day. Estimating conservatively on the basis of the so-called statistical family of five persons, this means that at least three-quarters of a million of the men, women, and children of this country were directly and vitally benefited by the abolition of this survival of human slavery—the twelve-hour day.

Seventeen years later, the man who wrote the report, Major Heber Blankenhorn, paid tribute to the courage of its sponsors :

“At first, skeptical of clergy, I wondered why they all went through to the end. Conscience seemed to be the explanation. A commission of lawyers, of legislators, by my experience, would have weaseled out, and scientists would have qualified. These churchmen, faced by the simple ‘This is the truth, shall the word be spoken?’ although with some ‘Lord help me’s,’ voted aye. Thus conscience doth not make cowards of us all.”

Attempting to appraise the permanent contribution made by the Report, the Major wrote:

“To change the opinion of a nation is to make history, even if the opinion is limited to a single important event. An item of concrete improvement did result from the churchmen’s survey, its words actually helped free steelworkers from the twelve-hour day. This Church recommendation stemmed directly into what the government did at long last. The Church by investigating and publishing in 1920 had indeed done a government job. Beginning in 1933, the government did legislate to foster conferences of collective bargainers in industry; it did denounce as economic royalists

those whom the churchmen had called autocrats; it did investigate exactly where the churchmen pointed, namely to industry's labor spies and paid sheriffs, and to industry's violations of civil liberties." ²

It is scarcely possible to define in black and white the value of anything as complex as the Steel Strike Report. The credit for it is shared by many. Fred saw the opportunity, seized upon it and appointed a fearless Commission of Inquiry to carry on. Bishop McConnell and Dr. Poling gave the Commission inspiring leadership. The investigators and technicians, the Interchurch Executive Committee who endorsed and sponsored the Report, all contributed their share.

The influence of this Report reaches on into elusive and subtle values. It has been discussed and quoted until it has become a classic. The moral effects of the stand taken by the Church are incalculable. They form one of those pervasive influences affecting the spirit of a civilization, but defying weights and measures.

² *Religion and Public Affairs*, a symposium in honor of Bishop Francis John McConnell, Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry. Macmillan, 1937.

CHAPTER VII

THE YOUNGEST BISHOP

Fred Fisher was elected bishop in 1920, and sent to Calcutta to the area vacated by Bishop Thoburn when he retired in 1909. It was only eighteen years since Bishop Thoburn had laid his hands on the head of the eager, inexperienced boy from Muncie with the words, "I hereby set you apart for Christ and the world." Fred Fisher had covered an amazing distance in a brief eighteen years.

He had scored spectacular achievements in jobs that took him back and forth across the country—the Board of Foreign Missions, the Laymen's Missionary Movement, the Centenary Committee, and finally the Interchurch World Movement. In spite of his youth, he was one of the best known and most talked about men in his church.

He was elected to the Episcopacy of the Methodist Episcopal Church by the members of the General Conference in session in Des Moines, Iowa, on May 15, 1920. They gave him the highest vote ever recorded up to that time, 659 ballots. This was 117 more than were needed for his election. He was thirty-eight years old and became the church's youngest bishop in a century, since the pioneer days of Coke, Janes and Roberts.

After his election, they asked Fred where he wanted to be sent, and he replied, "To India." Fred was assigned to the Calcutta area, and he and Edith left almost immediately. Bishop Warne was already stationed in northwestern India, Bishop Robinson in Bombay, and Bishop Lester Smith was sent out at the same time as Fred—to Bangalore.

It was a very different trip from their first ocean voyage sixteen years earlier when two unsophisticated and bewildered young people had sailed into an unknown world, with a minimum of financial backing and of worldly experience. By 1920 Fred had become a leading figure of the Methodist Church. He had received the highest recognition of his church and was returning to his chosen field armed with authority and prestige.

Uneasy Lies the Head

His notebooks testify to the solemn heart-searching with which he accepted this formidable honor. Page after page of his virile, legible script records the problems that occupied his mind. He was returning to a life of crowding responsibilities made more complex by his passion for blazing new trails, for taking the long view. Yet he found time to enter scores of quotations which evidence an impressive catholicity of reading and of interest. Their central theme is human efficiency, how best he might conserve and develop his powers for the effective delivery of his message.

He has pages of rules, annotated with thoughtful comments. He copied Aristotle's description of the Ideal Man from his *Ethics*, Francis Bacon on the science of success in life, Spinoza's code of conduct, William James, Coué, Wilfred Lay, and scores of others. He quoted at length from Lytton Strachey's *Queen Victoria*, and the passages are revealing. He quoted, for instance, that wistful incident which Strachey tells so sympathetically—the first official act of the eighteen-year-old princess who had just been proclaimed Queen. "To her mother she said, 'Am I truly, dear Mamma, the Queen of England?' On being assured, she said, 'Then grant me the first request I make to you as Queen— Let me be by myself for an hour!'" He quoted the advice of that shrewd, old sophisticate, Victoria's Uncle Leopold of Bel-

gium, who counselled refusing to decide upon important questions off-hand, and it was noticed, comments Strachey, that the young Queen rarely gave an immediate answer to the applications made to her.

Another rule which Uncle Leopold told his young niece that he could not recommend too highly was "never to permit people to speak on subjects concerning yourself or your affairs without you yourself having desired them to do so. Should such a thing occur, change the conversation and make the individual feel that he had made a mistake."

By way of contrast, on the next page of Fred's notebook comes a bit of doggerel "from a card in a shop window in New York City":

When the whole blame world seems gone to pot,
And business on the bum,
A two-cent grin and a lifted chin
Helps some, my boy, helps some.

On the whole, the grin and lifted chin seem more characteristic of Fred than the hauteur of Uncle Leopold. And yet it was part of Fred's systematic thoroughness that he should face the problems created by his own cordial, friendly ways, and realize that, as bishop, he must have means of protecting himself, must consciously develop a technique for exerting authority without giving offense.

His notes pay a good deal of attention to the problems of the episcopacy. He has annotated the prayers used in the rite of Consecration of Bishops—that he may use his authority "not to hurt, but to help," and a notation that the service is not an ordination to a higher form of ministry above that of elder or presbyter, but is "a solemn and fitting consecration for the special and most sacred duties of superintendency in the Church." He quoted John Wesley's Six Points of

Brotherhood, and discussions by Bishop William Lawrence and other eminent clergymen of the especial responsibilities imposed by the office of bishop. There are several passages from H. K. Carroll's biography of Bishop Francis Asbury. The title of bishop, wrote the biographer "laid new and heavy burdens upon his shoulders, brought more insistent demands upon his crowded hours, his strength, his patience, heaped more reproach upon his laboring heart, made his sensitive soul the target for shafts of malice and misrepresentation, and burdened him daily with the care of all the churches." And again, "Doubtless he [Bishop Asbury] was an autocrat, as was John Wesley, but an autocrat was needed to bring order and discipline out of chaotic and inchoate conditions."

The problem of how best to make use of the considerable power conferred upon Fred by his new office gave him obvious concern. He listed pages of rules and suggestions: for the exercise of will in the conduct of life; for drilling the imagination; for developing self-control; for training the nerves. All these pages of cogitation finally boiled down to four simple rules which became his code of life. He quoted them and used them frequently throughout his remaining years:

1. No one can offend me.
2. I will not be discouraged.
3. I will let others think.
4. Jesus is my model.

Bombay

In late October, 1920, the newly elected Bishop and his wife arrived in Bombay. As on their first trip, they had stopped over in England—but with a difference. This time Fred wanted to talk to various Foreign Office officials, with

members of the Civil Service machine which administers Indian affairs. He must catch up on the two-year interval since his last visit to India.

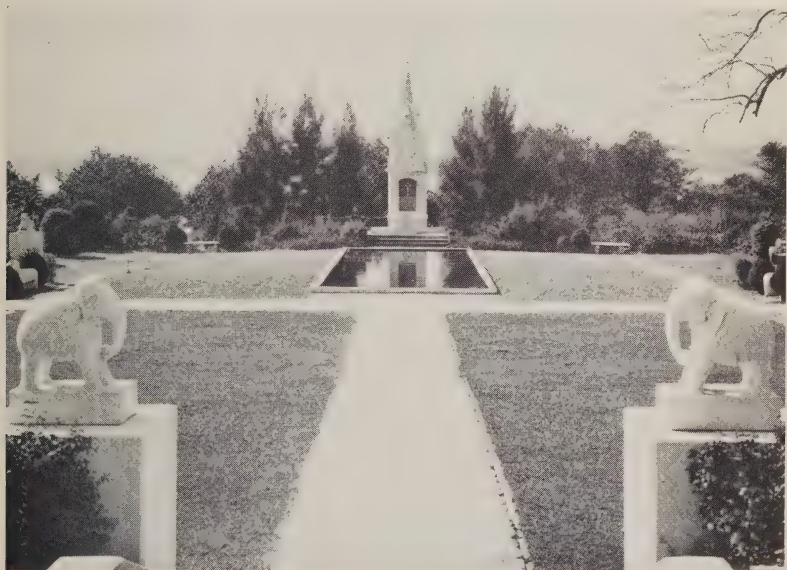
After Armistice Day of 1918, India, like the rest of the world, had changed rapidly. Fred had chanced to overhear the amazing tales brought home by some of the wounded men two years earlier. Now an army of one and a half millions was following up. Through the length and breadth of the land they were spreading a more complex message than mere yarns about tall buildings and strange customs. They were talking about Woodrow Wilson and his Fourteen Points and democracy. Self-determination was in the air. Fred had long since realized that the Nationalist leaders' rosy anticipations of Mr. Montagu's and Lord Chelmsford's influence on their behalf were doomed to bitter disappointment.

This inevitable political let-down only laid a more urgent burden upon Fred to do his part towards securing self-determination in the Indian Church. In his heart he sympathized with the aspirations of the Nationalist leaders for an increasing degree of self-government and more rapid progress towards dominion status. As an American he could do nothing to help them in this struggle. It was outside his province. He could, however, bear public witness to their fitness for self-government by helping them to secure an autonomous Indian Church. But first, he must have a comprehensive view of the entire situation and a summary of problems to be met. There was urgent need to revamp and liberalize the whole machinery of administering the Church in the foreign field. The process of electing foreign bishops, for instance, must be made more responsive to the needs of self-governing churches in the various countries.

Reading, mulling, meditating were not enough. He must find out what the church leaders were thinking. During the



Church Headquarters at Calcutta



A Hindu Temple of 239 pieces of carved red sandstone brought from Benares by Bishop Fisher. It now stands with Christian symbols as a Fisher Memorial on the campus in Lakeland, Florida.

winter he held preliminary conferences with small groups. At the beginning of the first hot season, in April, 1921, Fred rented a villa in cool Darjeeling. This hill station, 6,500 feet above sea level in the Himalayan Mountains, is the hot weather retreat of north-eastern India. The first group whom Fred invited to his little villa in Darjeeling were his colleagues, the three other bishops and their wives. The second group Fred and Edith entertained were the cabinet of the Bengal Annual Conference, and included the Reverend George Henderson, H. Koch, H. M. Swan and D. H. Manley. It is significant that every member of the cabinet at that time was an American missionary. There was not one Indian among them.

The third group Fred asked was comprised of nine outstanding Indian leaders of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India: Professor L. J. Chatterji, head of Collins Institute; the Reverend J. R. Chitambar, later President of Lucknow Christian College and later still Bishop; the Reverend M. K. Chakravati; Professor J. J. Cornelius, now J. M. Kumarrappa; the Reverend Samuel Datt; Professor J. Devadasan, later Principal of the Bareilly Theological School; the Reverend G. L. Lorenzo, considered by many the most dynamic preacher in the Indian Church; Mr. S. K. Mondol, later Bishop, and Professor M. C. Singh, now Pastor of the outstanding Methodist Church in Lucknow. Many of these Indian leaders had been delegates to our quadrennial church conferences in the United States. Only one, Professor John Cornelius had been educated in America.

Their newly arrived Bishop shocked and pleased these men with the announcement that "when you can agree on the Indian whom you would like to have as bishop, I shall not only do all I can to help you elect him, but I promise to resign and turn over my area to him." It is a tribute to Fred's leadership that this early group includes the only two Indian

bishops the Church has had: the Reverend Joshwant R. Chitambar, elected bishop by the Central Conference of 1930 in Cawnpore, and the Rev. S. K. Mondol elected at the Central Conference of 1941 in Delhi.

The All-Highest

During April and May, 1921, the hot-weather months, while Fred was orienting his church's task in relation to India's political progress, scientific history was also being made right beside him in the coolness of this remote hill station of Darjeeling.

Fred loved the Himalayas and with a touch of emotion he used to describe this highest mountain in the world as "rising six measured miles into the heavens." The mountain's real name, by which it has been called for thousands of years, is Chomo-Lungma-Guard of the Gate of Heaven. It irked Fred that, because a Surveyor General named Everest in 1858 estimated the mountain's height, base and location, the mountain must be renamed Everest in all the geographies of the world.

Mount Everest stood on the borders of Nepal and Tibet. These little countries had heretofore resolutely barricaded their borders against Europeans. In later years, Fred and I were to hear at first hand from the Dalai Lama's Prime Minister his own account of this policy. The Prime Minister was visiting in Calcutta. Through an Indian Sadhu—or wandering priest—a friend of Fred's who knew Tibet intimately, we had the temerity to invite the Prime Minister to take tea with us, and were thrilled when he accepted. Such an occasion called for the best that our home afforded. I got out my best Chinese tea cups with silver saucers. I brought out my red silk lacquer tea poys, and I planned the high seat where the Prime Minister must sit, with a view of my cherished Tibetan pictures and embroideries.

The day and hour came, and this representative of the remote and mysterious Dalai Lama arrived in a high-powered American motor car which came swinging at full speed around the driveway.

"Will Your Excellency be seated?" said I in my best oriental manner, gesturing him, Chinese fashion, to the seat of vantage. I did want him to like us and to feel at home. What an oriental picture he made. He wore a rich gown of glowing yellow satin embroidered with a bold Chinese design. His queue was long and neat. His features were pure American Indian. I served jasmine tea in Chinese cups on lacquered tables. His eyes shone. He took up the cup with the saucer, proper Chinese fashion, brushed back the jasmine flowers and tea leaves, and then loudly drew in his breath to cool off the tea, and to express his pleasure.

We talked of the latest Mount Everest expedition—this was in 1925—of the telegraph wires with which His Excellency planned to link Lhasa with the outside world, a plan which was abruptly abandoned as threatening their cherished seclusion. At an opportune moment, Fred in his most diplomatic manner, expressed his interest in and appreciation of His Excellency's lofty country, and said that he hoped some day to have the privilege of knowing His Excellency and his country better.

Until then all had gone swimmingly. Mutual compliments and pleasantries had put us on an admirably easy footing. The Prime Minister, perhaps flattered by our familiarity with Chinese etiquette and our eagerness to meet him more than halfway, had shown himself very human and agreeable. At this question of Fred's, we visibly lost ground.

"My country is closed, sir," answered the Tibetan laconically.

"Will it always be closed?" asked Fred with a genial smile.

"Always, even to you Christians."

"We have found you so frank, Your Excellency," said Fred—the ice was getting very thin, "will you not tell us why you have closed your country so tightly against us?"

The Secret of Tibet

"I shall tell you, sir, if you are sincere in your desire to know." And in his direct, blunt fashion, he told us the story. "Sometimes we have thought of letting you missionaries of Jesus come. For your message is one of love and friendship and our people like you. But if we let you missionaries come, you teach our people to desire many things which they do not have, which our country does not have. They see the missionaries using things which they would like, things which, I admit, are both attractive and useful.

"By that time the traders—your western traders—have learned of their desires and come along with all these things our people have been taught to want. Trade grows. By and by our traders and your traders quarrel and need protection. They send to their governments, then their soldiers come, and our people are killed. There is war. And by and by, we look at the flagpole. It is not our flag, but your flag. Our flag is hauled down and trampled upon and a European flag is in its place. And our country is no more. No, Sahib, we shall not let your people in, even with the message of love. It is dangerous."

Fred and I exchanged glances. We realized that we had heard in tabloid form the essential story of European expansion and imperialism from the oriental point of view. There was no answer.

In spite of the misgivings so admirably expressed by the Prime Minister of Tibet, during Fred's first summer in Darjeeling in 1921, the governments of Nepal and Tibet had reluctantly consented to the passage of an expedition along

their borders. Promises were exacted that the party would limit their activities to scientific observations exclusively.

Sir Francis Younghusband, President of the Royal Geographical Society, had announced that the consent had been given and that the expedition would start from Darjeeling in May. Fred Fisher had been made a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society earlier that year, and he was fascinated by the virgin field of exploration which lay before them.

The actual scientific party numbered only half a dozen men. But they had a legion of helpers. General Rawlinson, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, contributed a hundred mules. The mules, photographic equipment and food arrived by the narrow-gauge, switch-back railway from Calcutta via Siliguri. Darjeeling was all agog over the expedition. The next excitement was occasioned by the arrival of fifty Sherpa Bhotia coolies from Nepal. Sponsored by the Viceroy himself, Colonel Howard-Bury, leader of the expedition had secured the acquiescence of the Dalai Lama in permitting the expedition to set up its caravanserai at certain outposts.

Travelling in two sections, with fifty mules and twenty-five coolies in each, they left Darjeeling on May 18th and 19th, and it was quite an occasion. Fred delivered the parting prayer on their behalf. Whether he moved them I cannot say, but Fred himself was deeply moved.

This was the only expedition that Fred was to see off from Darjeeling. It was rather a scouting party to "discover the most practical way to the summit," and all the men returned safely. When the 1922 and 1924 parties set out, Fred was in the United States. On our arrival in India later in 1924 we learned of the epic heroism of Mallory and Irving. Fred had known the former as a member of that original scouting party of 1921. "These gallant men," wrote Air-Commo-

dore P. F. M. Fellows in *First Over Everest*, "were last seen far, far up, still climbing, had victory almost within their grasp . . . and on the summit they now rest, monuments to a crowning triumph." Thousands of college students whom Fred addressed in those days were deeply moved by Fred's eloquent story of Mallory and Irving who "when last seen were still climbing."

The Burden Bearer

When Fred first arrived in Darjeeling he was shocked to be met at the railroad station by women coolies who clamored for the privilege of carrying his heavy luggage, steamer trunks and heavy cartons of books over the rough mountain roads to his villa a mile distant. They were Sherpa Bhotia coolies of the same Nepalese tribes who accompanied the Everest expeditions. Fred came to know them better as he stayed at Darjeeling for they did most of the heavy work at the hill station. He learned to accept them as part of the local scene, and to realize that it would have been a hardship to refuse to permit them to do the work to which they were accustomed, and from which they made a living.

Although he conformed to the custom of the country, Fred was never able to take them for granted. I found among his papers a meditation in which he mused over this coolie burden bearer:

Darjeeling, India,
March 1, 1921

A TRINITY

"Here, climbing the hillside path, is a beautiful burden bearer—a clear-faced woman, with a pack of wood upon her back which would surely break mine. A strap over her head holds the load. Her body is swung forward in graceful and easy proportion. And as she climbs, she sings. And as she

sings, she knits. Think of carrying such a burden, with hands free to knit. And think of singing, with back weighed down and hands employed. This, truly, is the perfect trinity—to bear one's load with grace ascending, to give one's hands to useful service, and to let the heart sing withal."

When Fred withdrew from the desolating heat of the plains, and the crowding demands of his daily work, he found in Darjeeling two things which ministered to his weariness and which held for him healing and invigoration. They were the majesty of the snow-capped mountains and the precious sense of isolation, of getting away by himself to a loneliness where he could order his thoughts and see God more clearly. In a meditation at this time, he dwelt upon these themes:

Darjeeling, April 18, 1921

ISOLATION

"For two full hours I have watched the unmatched peak of snowy Everest. His base begins a hundred miles to the northward. And beyond this nearest line he rises, in pure and naked whiteness, to the unrivaled height of six measured miles. So high are his head and shoulders that human intrepidity has never yet invented the instruments, nor achieved the endurance, necessary to mount him. It is not known whether human life can be sustained in the rare atmosphere he breathes. But some day, even he, this last geographic outpost—more unyielding than the icepoles of North and South—must bow his head to the human yoke.

"Meantime he stands in isolated greatness. As I unwavering look, the clouds are gradually but inevitably surrounding him. Yet, strangely, no other clouds obscure the sky and sun. In this I behold a type. Two hours ago not a cloud could be seen. Suddenly I saw a little spiral mist ascend from the very top of Everest. Having seen Aetna, I instinctively thought

of the volcano smoke. But I knew that an eternity of ice had smothered any smouldering fires here. What made the mist? Whence came the clouds out of seeming nothingness? The hot eastern sun beat down upon the isolated snow and quietly compelled the giant peak to doff its own icy cap, and then sucked up the cap as vapory cloud. The lower range of snows is still in sight, clear and beautiful, but Everest has made the cloud that now all but obscures him.

"How true this is of nations and of men. We crave greatness beyond our fellows, thinking it grandeur to outmatch them. But no sooner doth Greece or Rome, Napoleon or Wilhelm, climb the utmost heights, than they themselves, by their very isolation, produce the forces that obscure and undo them. The height of greatness makes it the target of the sun and wind. Internal pride or external envy work havoc soon or late. For joined with the mist from his own melting cap, is the rising cloud from his lower neighbors.

"Which is better, to achieve cold, isolated greatness, or to find one's place with the middle peaks, which in their united bulk and more steady view, eclipse the lone, unfriendly sentinel?"

Edith's Death

Early in June, Fred and Edith were ready to return to Calcutta. The intense heat begins in India about the middle of March and grows steadily worse until May casts her withering death upon every living thing. When the monsoons break about the middle of June, the white man is able to return to sea level. Edith's long stay in the United States seemed to have restored her health, and she had come through their 1917-18 visit to India in such good shape that they were confident that she had conquered her old difficulties. A few days before they were to leave the hills she was helping an outcaste mother carry her sick baby to the dis-

pensary. With ready sympathy, she took the baby into her own arms, unaware that the child was burning up with typhus fever. A few hours later Edith came down with the same fever, and within three days she was dead. She was buried in Calcutta and on her tombstone Fred put these eloquent words, "SHE DIED SERVING."

Left alone, Fred concentrated his energies upon his chosen work of building an indigenous church. Premonitions of such a goal had come to him, as a boy, when he had thrilled to the beauty of the Taj Mahal, and later in 1918 when he had felt the momentum of the rising tide of Indian nationalism. Now he had the authority to put bone and sinews into his dream. Travelling up and down through his Calcutta area, he pled with the churchmen in his charge to "keep up with India."

As a first step, Fred wanted, wherever possible, to appoint Indians as heads of the missionary schools and colleges. At all meetings of the boards and trustees of these institutions, Fred consistently advocated this policy. He told me of an amusing incident that took place at a meeting of college trustees in the area of Bishop Warne who presided at the meeting. The American principal of the college was retiring. Fred and some of the other trustees wanted an Indian elected in his place. A conservative, old-school missionary opposed the suggestion at length. It became apparent that the trustees were going to vote for the Indian anyway. The conservative brother appealed to Bishop Warne.

"Bishop, I think we ought to pray about this matter."

"Very well," said the Bishop, "suppose you lead us." All knelt by their chairs and the old missionary prayed somewhat as follows:

"Oh Lord, we are in great danger of making a mistake just now. Indeed, Lord, we are just about to make a mistake. Thou knowest, Lord, that the disciples made a mistake when

they chose a successor to Judas." Sensing the implied reflection on the retiring principal who was present, the brother hastily added:

"Not, Lord, that we have anything against Brother B——. He is a most excellent and able man. But simply that even the disciples made a mistake in making a choice for the successor to Judas." Realizing that he was stumbling into deep waters theologically, he added, "At least, Lord, we think they made a mistake."

When he finished, his associates were struggling to suppress their laughter and for a moment no one dared to speak. To relieve the situation Fred said to the presiding officer, "Bishop Warne, I should like to ask Brother M—— a question. How does he know that the disciples made a mistake when they chose a successor to Judas?" The meeting rocked with laughter. In the end, as Brother M—— had feared, they elected the Indian.

The Church had many able Indian men and women. They needed only to be given an opportunity to develop their powers of leadership. Fred decided to hold a conference in Calcutta where Indian men and women would take the initiative. They chose the theme, "Building the Indian Church."

Delegates to this convention paid their own travel expenses, although in many cases this meant real sacrifice. They came from Lucknow, Jubbulpore, Darjeeling and the entire area, including Burma. The schools and families of Calcutta gave them lodging. A generous friend in the United States sent Fred funds to cover all expenses for food.

Fred was a master hand at planning conventions. The delegates were met at the Howrah railroad station, and each one was handed a card bearing his name, lodging, hostess, dining-room table and number, and the place for his discussion group. An information booth was scarcely needed. Everything clicked—an innovation in easy-going India.

Some of the Indian women delegates were professors in Isabella Thoburn College, others were doctors and principals of secondary schools. For the first time at an Indian church conference, women served as chairmen and at the close read their committee findings. The Church was now catching up with the Indian Nationalist movement in the recognition accorded to women.

In so far as Fred could find capable leaders, he appointed Indian district superintendents. In Lucknow Conference he appointed a full cabinet of Indians, making it the first conference in India where all district superintendents were nationals. The American missionaries in his area heartened Fred by complete coöperation in his program. Not one American objected to stepping aside and yielding his place to an Indian. Fred Fisher rejoiced in every Indian Christian who was not making himself a carbon copy of the white man. He looked far ahead and saw that unless the Church of Christ became naturalized upon the soil of India, it would never be able to support itself financially.

Pukka Indian

One of the young men at this convention in whom Fred was especially interested was John Cornelius, a Ph.D. from Columbia University, whose grandfather, when he became a Christian had changed his name from Kumarappa to Cornelius, as was then the custom. For three generations the men of the family had worn western dress as a matter of course. They felt more at home in trousers, coats, and waistcoats than in their own Indian garb. On the second day of the convention, John, who was staying at Fred's house, went to his room and after a few moments appeared clad in Gandhi homespun, his bare feet in straw sandals.

"This is my native dress," he said passionately, "and I have become, once and for all, an Indian. I shall eat what

Indians eat. I shall live as Indians live. I shall be completely and altogether Indian. I shall be myself. This is the only path for us Indians to take, and until the Church makes its humble confession before Almighty God for its highhandedness, and until the Indian Christians forget their foreign entanglements and become Indians there will be no truly Indian Church."

About this time Fred began to have administrative troubles. They were not due to his growing Calcutta church but to lack of support from the Church at home. The five-year pledges from the Centenary were breaking down; money was not coming through to finish the churches whose foundations had been laid and to carry on school expansion. Fred knew that what was true in India was true in all the mission fields of the world.

In the winter of 1922 after the Bishops of Eastern Asia had met in Singapore to discuss the work of the Church in the Pacific Basin, even then growing in importance, Fred came on to San Francisco to put his shoulder to the wheel of the campaign that Secretary Ralph Diffendorfer had appropriately called the "I Will Maintain" Campaign. A good many devoted people helped to raise that \$2,000,000 to bolster up the capital Centenary subscriptions. But Bishop Hughes, Bishop Henderson and Bishop Fisher carried the heaviest loads. I remember well the last "Bishop Fred B. Fisher Dinner" held at the Commodore Hotel in New York on October 30, 1922, when Fred's irresistible eloquence pulled from my small bank account a check for \$100 which I could only sacrificially afford.

That high-pressure campaign almost wrecked Fred's health, and the humid climate of Calcutta was to occasion further difficulties. On his way back to India, Fred stopped off in London as usual, seeing among others, Dr. J. H. Oldham, C. F. Andrews, and William Paton who was Secretary

for the National Christian Council of India. He would drop in at the India office, the Royal Geographical Society, the India League, the Liberal Club and other centers where he met men informed and concerned with problems of empire.

Then back to Bombay, and across India to Calcutta to resume work on the most cherished dream of his life—building an indigenous church.

A few years later Fred was to be elected to the executive committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order, a committee devoted to unification of the Christian churches. The cause of Church Union had always been of primary importance to Fred, and it was therefore appropriate that he should have been the unifying spirit in the merging of two congregations, Unitarian and Methodist, into one, and should have had the privilege of accepting on behalf of the Methodist Episcopal Church a beautiful stone edifice costing \$200,000 from some generous Unitarians.

"I owned a Church for a day," he used to laugh, in telling the story and it was a pleasant memory to him.

The church was not far from the little frame building in North Cohasset which had been his first charge while he was studying at Boston University. Mr. and Mrs. Albert A. Pope of Boston had built it in 1900 on the famous Jerusalem Road, in Cohasset as a memorial to their only son.

On Fred's trips home from India or between tours in this country, whenever he visited Hingham he would preach in his little frame church and the Popes and other summer residents used to leave their Unitarian Church and come to hear young Fisher from India. This was the beginning of Fred's friendship with the Popes, until now, Mrs. Pope, a widow, wanted Fred to serve as her agent in making the gift.

A succession of young ministers had come and gone in both churches and both congregations were dwindling. Finally, the time came when Fred found that both ministers favored the

union. The Rev. G. E. Dunbar for the Unitarians and the Rev. E. S. Johnson for the Methodists had convinced their respective parishes of the desirability of a merger.

At a meeting of the two congregations on March 2, 1924, it was announced that Bishop Fisher would preach and, "after the service a joint business meeting will be held of the two congregations to promote the union." At that meeting Fred publicly accepted Mrs. Pope's generous gift in the name of his church. It was, he said, the fulfillment of his dream and a symbol of Christian coöperation to the community. At the annual session of the New England Southern Conference at Providence a few weeks later, "the complete and effective union of the Unitarian and Methodist churches of North Cohasset" was announced, "hereafter to be known as the Pope Memorial Church." Bishop Hughes, then Bishop of the Boston area, expressed his appreciation of this novel experience of taking title to a new church without having had to help raise the mortgage.

CHAPTER VIII

A CHINESE HONEYMOON

Fred came home to the United States to attend the General Conference in Springfield in 1924, and it was there that we announced our engagement.

A close friend, on hearing the news, said, "But, my dear, aren't you afraid to marry a man who lives by such leaps? Do you think you can hold him down?"

"I don't want to hold him down," I replied. "I'll leap with him."

We were married quietly in New York City on June 18, 1924, by Bishop William F. McDowell of Washington. Our small wedding party included Fredericka Kiang, a Chinese girl who had just won a Phi Beta Kappa Key at Vassar, and Evangeline Thilyampallam, an Indian girl who had recently taken her Ph.D. at Columbia. My cousin, Mrs. William H. Bliss, gave me the wedding, and sent out the announcements which went to the ends of the earth.

Little Sister Han

Laughingly Fred told his friends that he was not only marrying Welthy Honsinger, but also "Little Sister Han" (my Chinese name) who would insist on bringing all the 450 millions of China along with her. For ten years I had been working for China. I had raised the money and built the Baldwin School for Girls in Nanchang, where I was principal.

It would have been difficult for us to have a honeymoon in this country. There were so many churches to be dedicated,

summer assemblies to be addressed, special missions to be undertaken. So we set out on our journey to India, sailing from Vancouver via China, my old home. As our Canadian Pacific steamer anchored in Shanghai harbor, word came down to the passengers from the bridge that anyone wishing to go ashore must do so at his own risk.

It is interesting to think back to those confused days of 1924 and realize how profoundly the national scene has changed in the interval. A variety of war lords divided power between them, and prevented China from achieving unity of policy or effort. Wu Pei Fu was in the saddle in Peking, an outspoken enemy of Sun Yat-Sen. Feng Yu-Hsiang, the Christian General, was planning his coup to rout Marshal Wu, with the assistance of Chang Tso-Ling.

Sun Yat-Sen was still alive, but he was keeping pretty much to his own southern province of Kwantung, and its capital, Canton, where he was sure of his power, and where he was absorbed in training young Chinese to be the leaders of the future. It seems probable that he knew that he had not much time left, for a few months later, in an attempt to reconcile the warring factions, he ventured north into Peking. And there in Peking the great Chinese leader died of cancer.

Madame Sun Yat-Sen

Dr. Sun's widow, the first member of the Soong family to marry a national figure, was not herself widely known at this time, but has risen to a position of importance in the years since. Her devotion to the principles of her great husband, the liberator of his country, and the unassuming modesty of her own life, have won her nation-wide respect and affection, and she undoubtedly stands as high in the hearts of her own people as does her famous sister.

In 1924, Madame Sun Yat-Sen's pretty young sister was

still Mayling Soong. She had recently returned from the United States where she had been graduated from Wellesley College, and she was at that time devoting herself to social work in Shanghai, and attempting to check the exploitation of child labor in the foreign-owned and Chinese factories surrounding Shanghai. Her brilliant career as the wife of the Generalissimo, and China's unofficial ambassador to the western world, lay all before her.

We arrived in Shanghai in August, 1924, and took our belongings ashore in spite of the Captain's warning. True, Shanghai was on the edge of another revolution. But I was an old China hand and Fred was an understanding individual who had been in China twice before. So we started up the Yangtze on the river steamer to pass through two revolutions into the calm interior beyond.

The Chihli-Mukden war was raging in the North, but more important perhaps than revolution was the fact that this year saw Soviet Russia's Red Star in the ascendancy in China. Soviet Russia and China had just concluded a treaty acknowledging mutual national equality and Russia had been the first of the western powers to give up the extra-territorial rights seized by the west a century earlier—an injustice which rankled deep in China's breast.

As a result of this accord, when the Kuomintang held its first national congress in 1924, it reorganized along Soviet lines and even permitted Chinese Communists to become members. As an added sign of respect, the Kuomintang also asked Russia to direct the establishment of the Whampoa Military Academy in Canton, the alumni of which school now surround Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, and who are the wearers of China's "old school tie." In those days, Chiang Kai-Shek was merely a young disciple of Sun Yat-Sen's who had recently returned from a mission to Moscow,

and had been made principal of the new school. Those on the inside also knew that he was being trained as Dr. Sun's successor.

When Fred and I arrived in Kiukiang from Shanghai on the Yangtze river steamer in 1924, there was not one mile of railroad in the province. We transferred ourselves to a sail boat as I had so often done during my ten years residence in Nanchang. My faithful old cook Tsung Tse-Fu, now almost blind, had come one hundred miles to meet us, and took entire charge of the rest of our journey through inland China.

Lotus Days on a Sailing Junk

In our sailing junk, we slipped down the Yangtze for thirty miles to Hu Kou—literally, the mouth of the lake—which ushered us into the wide expanse of the beautiful inland lake, Poyang. The Buddhists have taken possession of the rocky gorge commanding the lake. Rambling monasteries creep up the mountain, towering pagodas and red tiled temple roofs nestle among gardens and shade trees on the terraced hillside.

As we turned into the lake, Fred remarked, "Buddhism is the only power that has ever completely captured China; her art and architecture, her culture and philosophy have been saturated with it." Wistfully he added, "How long will it take for Christianity to become indigenous in this fascinating country?"

We sat together on the boat deck under full sail looking out over this gorgeous panorama. For the first time Fred sensed the beauty of the real China away from treaty ports and foreign devils. And of course I took the opportunity to indulge in my adventures on these very waters. Passing the village where I had had a shipwreck, Fred insisted that the boatman haul down the sail and drop anchor so that I might point out this and that memorable spot.

Shipwreck on a China Sea

The shipwreck had occurred on one of my many journeys back and forth across this lake from Nanchang to Kiukiang, during the years when I was building the Baldwin School for Girls. After raising funds in the United States, I came back with plans for four buildings, two of them so ambitious that the contractors of Nanchang hesitated to undertake them. Perforce, I became my own contractor, buying materials and engaging labor through the Lao Bans. It was officially reported that a company projecting a railway had stored hundreds of thousands of bricks in Kiukiang. They were to have been used for a terminal; with influence, I might buy them.

My good friend, the Governor of the province, General Li Lieh-Chun, oiled the wheels, and upon arrival in Kiukiang, I succeeded in buying all the hundred thousands of bricks I needed. At the same time I discovered a shipment of freight from the United States awaiting me on the docks. My sister had surprised me by sending our home piano clear across the world. If I could move it the last lap of the journey, it would be the first piano to enter the ancient city of Nanchang.

At this point I added to my responsibilities as contractor, the rôle of admiral. I hired a fleet of thirty junks and, commissioning my house boy as commander, I set sail down the raging Yangtze and into the choppy Poyang Lake. A vicious storm was raging. For days at a time, we anchored in isolated coves to await the storm's abatement, while the rest of my fleet lay—who knew where? We were out of touch with each other and the rest of the world for eleven days. Finally my own little boat was tossed upon the rocks.

My piano, my precious piano! I gulped hard as my dreams of teaching girls music faded away. In order to guarantee the piano the very best of care, I had had it put on my own junk. And now, as the boatman's family and I, after a mirac-

ulous rescue, were being taken ashore in a row boat, I had to watch helplessly while coolies pulled the dripping piano box out of the water and hoisted it on another rescue boat.

As I stepped ashore, I had a tantalizing reunion with ten of my large junks which had also been wrecked and lay, so my rescuers told me, at the bottom of the lake nearby. Soaked to the skin, I took shelter in the humble Chinese inn and held long conversations with the village patriarch. He had never talked to a foreign woman before, but he was courteous and helpful.

"Divers are the only people who can recover your bricks for you, Little Sister Han," he told me casually.

Who ever heard of Chinese divers? Not I. But China's background of four thousand years provides a precedent, a way out, for every difficulty. Through the capable patriarch, I engaged a corps of divers who immediately undertook to retrieve my precious bricks, one by one. In a mere matter of weeks the whole eighty thousand had been salvaged, landed in Nanchang, and had taken their destined place in the walls of my school buildings.

The piano episode, too, had a happy ending. I was able to bring a piano tuner from Shanghai who reconditioned the drowned piano, and it may be in use to this day.

Fortunately for us, Fred and I had perfect weather sailing across the lake where I had once been shipwrecked. After four days of unclouded sunshine, we dropped anchor in front of the ancient Da Shen Men gate of the walled city of Nanchang, my old home.

We were met by a large group of Chinese and a sprinkling of Americans—to the accompaniment of thousands of popping fire-crackers. They made such a noise we could scarcely hear the words of welcome.

"What a contrast to a welcome in India," Fred confided to me that evening when we were alone. "There they hang

fragrant jasmine garlands around our necks and recite their welcomes, but it is all done so quietly. Why the noise?"

"Fire-crackers are gay. They make any occasion festive, they express happiness. Don't you feel their appropriateness?" I asked. "And besides, the Chinese invented gunpowder, not for killing people, but for doing the honors at the birth and death of human beings, and for welcoming you and me back home."

How different was the entrance of Jimmy Doolittle and his men when they dropped down into that selfsame province of Kiangsi on April 18, 1943, twenty years later. Then the Chinese turned out to give him their own genuine welcome—no more fire-crackers after five years of war, instead there was food and the nursing care which these brave fliers needed. But after the aviators left, a worse than Lidice happened to Ying Tan and twenty-eight other towns of the province. They paid a heavy penalty for their hospitality to our men. The towns were reduced to ashes. All but one of my beautiful school buildings have been used as a barracks for Japanese soldiers since the early autumn of 1937. That building was bombed, and it, too, lies in ashes.

My Old Home

When Fred and I visited Nanchang in 1924, it was a proud old city, the capital of Kiangsi province with its forty-five million people. The city had a population of well over a million, but it had scant connection with the outer world—no telephone, no railroad, the sewage system was still an army of men who carried out the night soil in buckets hanging from bamboo poles on their shoulders. The water system was a chain of public wells. They did not even use pumps, but still carried their water in buckets to their hundreds of thousands of homes. Nanchang had never signed a treaty with a foreign power; it had no foreign consuls, nor foreign busi-

ness men. It was a Chinese city—free of all foreign entanglements.

Fred was, as far as I knew, Nanchang's first visitor from India. The gentry, the officials, and scholars plied him with questions which showed a surprising international awareness in this remote backwater.

How far had scientific thought penetrated into India's philosophic thinking? Was the Nationalist movement in India truly oriental, as it seemed to be, or did it owe something to western backing? That was a startling question to Fred. But China had not then achieved her present unity. The war lords seemed firmly entrenched. Some Chinese leaders feared that China would attain unity only with the aid of foreigners.

Then came questions on the benefits of literacy. Did the Bishop think that all the millions of the world's people needed to be able to read? Did India think it necessary? Were there telephones in India? In fact, wasn't India very much like the International Settlement of Shanghai? Did all the people of India look like the policemen (Sikhs) that the British brought from India to Shanghai and Hongkong? What was Gandhi really like? Wasn't he really a Buddhist at heart?

Back of Nanchang the country lay undisturbed as it had been hundreds upon hundreds of years, a placid, dignified, trusting civilization. Charmed by Nanchang, Fred was intrigued at my suggesting a journey to the famous old city of King Tehchen where for two thousand years the entire population has devoted itself to making porcelain. At that time the city had about forty thousand families which, according to Chinese estimates, would mean, eight to a family, three hundred and twenty thousand people.

Our old cook tried to get us a sailing junk which would carry us across the Poyang Lake and still be small enough to sail up the shallow Chang River to the quiet old city. However, our proud sailing junk proved too large and heavy for

the river and we were transferred to a flat-bottomed boat which was poled, not rowed, over the rapids. We lived for these last two days under a curved matting. In order to make the sharp turns of the river, the men at the pole had to look through the matting tunnel.

"Down on your stomachs!" the pole men would shout in Chinese, and we would obediently flatten ourselves out until we had rounded the turn. While lying on our stomachs with heads hanging over the edge of the boat, we discovered that the bed of the river, as well as the banks, were a mass of broken porcelain. We realized then that we were looking down at the accumulated breakage and casualties of many centuries. All the rare Soong and Ming dynasty vases, all the precious Chien Lungs that grace the Metropolitan in New York and the museums in London and Paris have been brought over this Chang River through these very rapids on these fragile boats out into the Poyang Lake down the Yangtze, through the Yellow Sea and across the Seven Seas to the lovers of beauty all over the world.

A Box Full of Money

The Chinese Revolution had played havoc with currency and one did not know from one day to the next what kind of paper money would be accepted. But Mexican silver dollars were always worth their weight in silver everywhere. Accordingly, we carried Mexican silver dollars. Three hundred dollars of United States money turned like magic into over a thousand dollars Mexican.

Our supply of Mexican silver dollars created more sensation than the two strange looking foreigners in the placid city of King Tehchen. It was their bulk and the way we had to carry them that caused the sensation. The old cook had them in a wooden box which had brought two dozen cans of Carnation milk from the States. The box was filled to the brim, and

the top nailed down tight. We hired an extra man to help carry the box.

It was a heavy box and when old man Chao was tired from carrying it, he would deposit it in the street and sit on it. The populace would rush out of their homes, shops, studios, from grinding wheels, from their kilns, to see the two "ocean men," but when they spied the man carrying the heavy box they lost interest in us.

"What thing carry you in the box?" they asked.

"A thousand dollars, no less," laughed old Chao.

"Won't this man of ours be robbed when the entire countryside knows what is in the box?" Fred whispered.

"No," I reassured him, "the safest way to do anything in China is to let everybody know just what you are doing. We shall have the coöperation of the whole town because they will all know about us by nightfall, and we shall be as safe as though we were in heaven."

Rural China was old, untouched China and it was honest, frankly curious, open-hearted, and friendly.

Fred was captivated at seeing the porcelains of the ancient city of King Tehchen made before his very eyes. On the clear moonlight night when we reluctantly left the old city, we took with us seventeen huge pieces of porcelain. They were so well packed that when we arrived in Calcutta nothing was broken.

This Chinese rural life enchanted Fred. He kept me busy translating his questions to the "pundits" as he called the village gentry where we tied up for the night. These gentlemen answered his questions with characteristic courtesy and so won Fred over that he began to make plans for a sabbatical year which he was never to take. We would rent a junk, fix it up as a simple, convenient unit, and sail lazily through the interior rivers of China. He wanted to talk at his leisure with China's citizens, to mingle with her placid farmers, and between times he would write his memoirs!

Because I had been so happy in my work in China, and had so truly loved the Chinese people with whom I worked, it made me very happy to see Fred fall an easy victim to their charm. He warmed to them from the outset. He liked and understood the way their minds worked. In spite of his love for India, it would, I believe, have been an easy matter for him to adjust himself to staying on in China.

Manila As It Was

En route to India, we paid a call of four days in Manila. Fred and I had both been in the islands previously, Fred in 1918 on his missionary tour, and I in the same year, oddly enough, when I spent a month studying the educational system.

Fred was especially interested to learn of recent developments in the Iglesia Filipina Independiente and its relations with our Protestant missions in the islands. In the past there had been a certain fear of this independent Catholic Church movement under the leadership of Archbishop Aglipay, as a possible promoter of rebellion against the American government. On this visit Fred found such fears completely dissipated. He considered that this Church should be approached as a religious opportunity. "It is a protesting and an independent Church and should be integrated into American plans for Filipino autonomy."

On our way to India we passed Singapore. The British government had been spending millions of pounds to strengthen defenses here and make this the Gibraltar of the East. There had been a world-wide barrage of publicity on the subject. We went ashore in an almost chastened frame of mind. We assumed that it was impregnable.

Our next stop was Ceylon. From the tip of India we travelled by rail to Calcutta. I had been in India before, but this was the first of many thousands of miles of India railroad

travel for Fred and myself together. Fred was an ideal travelling companion. He adapted himself at once to any situation.

He taught me that nothing is unbearable—unless we ourselves permit it to be. When we were riding on the hot dusty trains of India, the screeching of the flat wheels dinned into our ears all day long. But Fred would say:

“Now, Welthy, just get into the rhythm of that squeak! Make it a song!”

So he would try out two or three old hymns till he found the one that matched the cadence of the squeaking wheel—and lo it began to sing, “Faith of Our Fathers!”

Fourteen years with Fred Fisher convinced me that living is an adventure. He was interested in the smallest creature and the most insignificant happening in our day, and wove them into the rich tapestry of his enjoyment. I remember my first experience with a new and exasperating hot-weather bird. It reiterated its monotonous refrain so maddeningly that distracted white sahibs, already jumpy in the burning heat, had nicknamed it the “Brain Fever Bird.” But no bird was monotonous to Fred. He used to tell me the bird was shouting, “Hallelujah! I love you!” What woman could resist a man like that?

CHAPTER IX

WEEK END WITH TAGORE AND GANDHI

It was deep May in Calcutta. We lived in wells of silent, relentless heat. The only sound in houses, shops, banks, offices, was the occasional flutter of papers under the resurrecting purr of overhead fans. Brass paper-weights of Buddhas, Sivas and cobras held papers to the desks. People spoke softly. A raised voice took more energy and there was none to spare among the sahibs, nor among the Anglo-Indians whose thin Indian blood, mixed with white, gives them a sallow underdone look.

The Indians moved about in an at-homeness with the heat, inherited from forbears who for six thousand years have met these searing Mays, and for six thousand years have patiently awaited the steaming rains, the monsoons of June.

It was May again! The Indian slowed down to his hot-weather tempo, ate no meat, slept long hours, moved slowly, and in his comfortable, scant clothes smiled at the white man, sweltering in coats, collars and long trousers.

The heat was harder on Fred than on me, though I never heard him complain. He longed for a cool bath and finally discovered how to get one. Plumbing in a climate like Calcutta's was casual. Pipes attached to the outside walls of houses caught the full force of the sun's heat so that there was no such thing as cool water from the tap. Just before he went to bed Fred would fill the bathtub and let it cool off through the hours of darkness. Two or three times during the night I would hear him splashing and know that at last he was getting his cool tub.

We tempered our lives to the heat—who didn't? The day began early, and ended late, with an oasis of sleep in the middle.

"Are you sure this water has been boiled?" my husband called to me one morning, looking at the muddy water in the bottle on his bath shelf.

"I'm positive," was my reply, "for yesterday I had a talk with Dr. Bradley. He said, 'Not one drop of unboiled water is to touch your lips for brushing your teeth, or for any purpose, no matter what glowing accounts you hear of the Calcutta water supply. The body of a cow and a woman have been found in the filtration plant. They were too large to slide down the pipes!'" "

Calcutta, during May, decks itself with flowers. Streets are vibrant with color and the gold Mohur tree out-peacocks the peacock after which it is named.

When we were in Calcutta on a Sunday we made a pilgrimage, just before the vesper service, to Edith's grave, and smothered it with fragrant Indian flowers. We would stand in silent prayer, then leaving her wrapped in our love, would go on to the waiting congregation.

The drive down Mohur Avenue was a long archway festooned with gorgeous flowers. Heat seemed to bring out the blooming cassias, of rose, purple and gold. Jacaranda trees with their purple clusters, and acacias with their yellow mossy blossoms added to the sense of excitement. It was as though we were perpetually decorated for some gorgeous fete.

Our Calcutta Home

Our home was a six-room apartment in the church's general headquarters building at 3 Middleton Street. We had two spacious rooms, twenty by thirty feet in size, and the others were about eighteen by twenty-four. One of the large rooms was the Bishop's office, where his Indian secretary began work

at seven o'clock in the cool of the morning. The floors were concrete, painted dark red, and the ceilings twenty feet high. Entering a room we turned on overhead electric fans, and turned them off as we left. All the year round we slept under mosquito nets, with fans purring all night.

The kitchen was not included in our six-room apartment. Kitchens in India are always cook-houses, a little mud hut, built at the back of the compound. The stove is made of mud, and has four holes for the kettles on top and no chimney. The fire box underneath is supplied from the front with kindling worth its weight in gold, and after a good flame is started, charcoal is fed in from the top. The oven is a tin box, improvised from two Standard Oil tins, with a shelf inside, and a front door.

It is the custom of the country to subdivide the work into many tasks, both because of caste restrictions and in order to employ as many helpers as possible. India has the largest unemployed population in the world and the poverty seemed to me greater than in China. The climate also made a long day's work impossible. In a large building like ours, several apartments joined in employing one sweeper, because a sweeper could do nothing but clean floors. Laundry could not be done in the house but must be washed by a certain caste in a particular part of the city, where there was a pond and plenty of stones on which to beat the clothes. The process has called forth one of Mark Twain's famous quips. It was, he said, the first time he had ever seen people trying to break a rock with a shirt! I gave up using my good linens after a few sad experiences. My house boy in China had spoiled me, for he did as good a job as the best Parisian laundress.

Since all doors and windows are left open, with the exception of four or five hours in the worst heat of the day, there is little need of a doorbell. We had a living doorbell, however, little Buddhu. He was an outcaste who lived on the veranda,

carrying chits—messages—by day, sleeping on a strip of matting by night.

In India, as in China, the cook does all the marketing. It was two miles to the market. Baroda, the cook, sprinted the distance in his bare feet, though I insisted on his using a ricksha to bring home the bulky vegetables. For four years I kept house in Calcutta without a refrigerator. They are not easily come by as the English have never learned to use them. Consequently the cook had to buy just enough for each day's needs.

Fortunately for us, the cook was a Christian and had no prejudice against buying or cooking meat. We had beef only two or three times a season, however, because it was offensive to our Hindu guests. We lived chiefly on fish and chicken, which was no great hardship as we have all learned under war rationing.

Our Indian day began soon after dawn, at 5:30, in the cool of the morning. A barefooted bearer in white turban and long white coat wakened us with trays of chota hazri—little breakfast—which he thrust under the mosquito nets beside us. On the tray we found pots of tea and hot water, toast, and a banana. Sometimes instead of taking it in bed, we sat on our little veranda where an audience of crows flopped down beside us, and it was nip and tuck whether we or the crows got the banana. In central and southern India it is the monkeys who swiftly take the food off your plate right before your eyes.

After chota hazri came our silent reading until seven when the Brahman secretary, Sur Babu, arrived and Fred was off on another active day's work. At ten in the morning the servants began the ritual of closing all doors, windows, and blinds, in an effort to shut out the heat, letting in just enough shaded light for our work. In Calcutta calls were made before noon,

and we did our shopping, made business appointments, and did our errands before the heat of the day. At twelve came tiffin, followed by two or three hours of retreat into privacy or sleep for the entire continent. The heat was like the quivering sultriness of a burning day at the seashore; the quiet that settled over the city like that of the desert. Carpenters, masons, tailors, house servants slept wherever they happened to be. The bazaars were silent, the streets deserted. Even the sacred cows strolling down the Chowringhee—Calcutta's Fifth Avenue—lay in the middle of the street taking their naps.

At four or five the stricken city came to life. Servants arrived with more hot tea and people resumed their rounds of committee meetings, teas, tennis, golf, rugby on the Maidan, as their interests led them. At nine came a leisurely dinner, followed by a walk on the Maidan to end the day. All this is over now; with the fall of Hongkong fell a way of life.

A bishop could not linger long in any one place, however. Conferences, committees, local problems claimed his attention. We were forever packing our luggage and making an early start at daybreak or a late start in the evening for Lucknow, Cawnpore, Jubbulpore, Darjeeling. I remember vividly one of the early conferences that I attended with Fred. We were met at Bolpur with garlands—beautiful garlands of yellow marigold which they slipped over our heads as we stood bareheaded on the station platform. Every window of the long red train framed a dozen Indians almost falling out of their carriages in their curiosity as to who these Sahibs might be.

Bolpur is a glorified Bengal village, about two hours by train from Calcutta. It was January and by courtesy we called it winter. All seasons in Bengal are hot, the winter differing chiefly by its silenced punkas. According to Mark Twain we

had only two seasons—"one, when the door knobs were sticky, and the other, when the door knobs ran!" This was the sticky season.

The town of Bolpur is set among mango trees whose luxuriant shade make patterns on the baked earth. Lacy bamboos screen the jungle, for nature is lavish in Bengal and the trees know no season. When one finds a tree, one finds shade.

Our luggage of bedding rolls, tiffin basket, suitcases, typewriters, was piled high on the platform.

"It's a good thing Gandhi isn't here to see this mountain of luggage," chuckled my husband. "Why can't we do with less?"

Inside the church, Indians and missionaries of the Bengal Conference were buzzing. Even in India an American-administered church acquires an accelerated tempo. As soon as the garlanding was over, my husband's work began.

The church building, I regret to admit, was one of those monstrosities that we have built all over the world in complete disregard of indigenous architectural forms and local traditions of color and beauty. It was a box, bare and nondescript. But Fred Fisher, leading his people in their meditations, made these morning hours glowing and colorful.

A Hindu Ministry

It was at Bolpur that Fred formally consecrated a Hindu disciple to a new form of service, created to meet the needs of a transition period.

"Sudha Kanta Babu, I set thee apart as a social servant of Jesus Christ and may His living presence guide you."

Standing within the altar of our church at Bolpur, Fred solemnly laid his hands upon the head of the Hindu Brahman kneeling before him. Sudha Kanta Babu was not a baptized

Christian and did not wish to disfranchise himself in his Hindu community. He had, however, accepted the Christian message as his ideal and Fred Fisher considered it his privilege and his responsibility to help non-Christians realize our common ideals as well as to make them orthodox church members.

He conceived his job to be more than the mere holding of church conferences and looking after the "temporal and spiritual" well-being of the church. To coöperate with Indians who were groping for a better way of life and who were following the Christ pattern, was, to his mind, laying foundations for the larger Christendom. No Methodist wall nor even Christian wall could hold Fred.

He had first noticed this Brahman as he led the morning devotions of a Methodist conference with the theme, "Character Marks of the Modern Christian." One day as Fred was leaving the chancel, a soft voice accosted him:

"May I speak to you for a moment, Bishop?" Sudha Kanta asked. "I have listened to every word you have spoken here this week. I came to say that I wish to be ordained with your other ministers tomorrow."

"Ordained!" exclaimed my husband. "Are you a Christian?"

"No, I am a Hindu, but I want to follow your Christ and to interpret Him to my people!"

My husband looked carefully at this Indian making such an unusual request. He wore his white khaddar dhoti—(a piece of cloth draped about the hips and hanging to the knees, which Hindus wear instead of trousers) and a collarless shirt with the long tails hanging over the dhoti. Above this was a home-spun shawl, thrown gracefully over his shoulders, like a Roman toga. He was noticeable among the Christians because in turning to Christianity they usually adopt European clothes.

"If thy heart be as my heart—give me thy hand," John Wesley had said this and Fred repeated it to this Hindu disciple.

Sudha Kanta Roy Chaudhuri was a former librarian at Tagore's University at Shantiniketan. He had also worked with Gandhi in his farreaching social reforms. Now he was volunteering to leave his former life and establish himself as a social servant of Jesus Christ.

Suri, a typical small Bengali town eighty miles from Calcutta was selected as a suitable field for the experiment. He took his family, simple households goods, rented a small house, and began to make friends who soon realized he was shattering their Hindu orthodoxy and their complacency for he sought the acquaintance of Brahmans and outcastes alike. Local newspapers frequently accepted his articles on temperance, illiteracy, and the reformation of Hindu festivals. It was due to his influence that, beginning with the year 1928, the Hindu committees abolished gambling and nautch girls at their Melas.

Sudha Kanta had the freedom of our Calcutta home and our Darjeeling shack, like a younger brother. In fact the longer we lived in India the larger grew the number of our younger brothers. The diversity of these brothers, coupled with Fred's unpredictable hospitality, made of our tiffin a colorful, though sometimes a thinly stretched meal. Down through the years, what an exciting variety of guests sat at that tiffin table! Brahmans, Tibetan officials, Indian Ph.D.'s, British civil servants and the Army and Navy, Africans, Chinese scholars, Muslims, Christians of all races, American writers and tourists broke bread with us.

This John Wesley ordination of Sudha Kanta Babu was to prove a blessing to many. As a social servant of Jesus Christ, he had an influence among Brahmans and all classes of Hindus beyond the reach of any western Christian.

Brahman Good Samaritans

One sultry day in June an outcaste dropped dead on the main street of the little town of Suri, where Sudha Kanta had made his home. The outcaste was penniless and homeless. By this time, Sudha Kanta was well known in the city as a social worker, and was immediately informed by the police of the death of the outcaste. "What to do?" the police seemed to say helplessly. Sudha Kanta went immediately to the spot and after looking on the cold silent face of the old man, he sought out five of his Brahman friends.

"An outcaste lies dead on the street. He offers us an opportunity to demonstrate that every Indian is our brother regardless of caste," he told them. The six Brahmans walked in a body to the main street where a crowd stood watching, but far enough away not to be contaminated. These high-caste pall bearers gently picked up the gaunt, ragged Untouchable, laid him on a stretcher, and carried him to the river bank. There they made and lighted his funeral pyre. Silently the six proud Brahmans sat like mourning sons of a dead father, until this outcaste corpse was ashes. With due ritual they cast the ashes into the river, to be borne away to the sacred Ganges. The town was deeply moved and the people began to question one another as to what these things might mean.

Finding the old translation of the Sermon on the Mount stiff and meaningless, this Hindu servant of Jesus Christ made his own translation into flowing Bengali. He put it before Rabindranath Tagore who wrote my husband his cordial approval. Sudha Kanta persuaded the superintendent of primary education at Suri to use this new translation as one of the required subjects to be memorized and taught in the schools of the district.

A Christian Ashram

Chakravati Babu was another Hindu disciple who had the imagination to suggest a new type of service adapted to the Hindu scene, by which he might interpret the message of Christianity to his people.

Looking back, these new types of service suggested by the Indians themselves stand out as one of Fred's most important achievements in his major ambition, the encouragement of an indigenous Church. Indian initiative must be recognized and given ample opportunity to express itself and to develop if the Indians are to be capable of taking over the Church.

One day Chakravati Babu, an emaciated Bengali came for a conference with his Bishop. Chakravati had been a Brahman but was now an ordained Christian preacher. He said, "I want to preach, Bishop Sahib, but I want to do it in the Indian way. You know when you visit the great temples in Puri, the priest is always at the temple. He is not found running about, entering into people's homes unless he is sent for and then only in an emergency. It would be an intrusion into our Hindu life. So I, a Christian priest with the new light of Christ, should sit here in a Christian ashram by the side of the road where the stream of pilgrims pass. And, Bishop Sahib, I want my ashram under the very eaves of the temple of Kalighat!"

Kalighat is a gory place which has been over-publicized by India's critics. In reality it is as untypical of Hinduism as the Ku Klux Klan is of Christianity. Every day at noon one or more goats are killed by a priest in sacrifice—and to Americans as well as to many Indians, the sight is revolting.

As usual, there was no money in the mission budget for an ashram at Kalighat. By faith Fred Fisher rented the house, installed this Christian preacher and his wife, and it became a real ashram where many pilgrims came seeking truth. Fred

and I used to sit Indian fashion, on the bare ashram floor, listening to the pilgrims' stories of a lifelong quest for the Eternal. They had walked the dusty miles to Benares, to Allahabad for the great Mela—and now to Kalighat—but where was peace to be found?

Thousands of pilgrims passed the door, rich and poor, discouraged and ambitious, half starved or bulging with fat. Of these thousands every day some stopped at the welcoming ashram door of Chakravati Babu and carried away with them his message of the Christ.

For our last Christmas in India Fred devised an adaptation of Hindu customs to symbolize our annual festival of the Nativity which gave us both great pleasure. Fred suggested it—for it was always his imagination that ranged far afield, over the universe and into the starry heavens. Then I, like Martha followed along, carrying out his ideas. He kept me so busy that I rarely had a chance to do much imagining on my own account.

This time Fred's inspiration was to use Diwali lights for our Christmas decorations. It was before the use of electric-light bulbs for holiday trimmings had become common. Accordingly, I bought 4,000 pottery vessels, put wicks in them, filled them with oil and used them to outline our entire roof line, the eaves of every window and the roof of the portecochère. When night fell, some lithe Indian boys, accustomed to climbing palm trees, swarmed over our house, deftly lighting all the little lights.

The building was large and high, and it made a lovely flickering pattern against the tropical night sky, announcing to all our neighbors our Christian festival, the anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ. Our neighbor, the Maharajah of Burdwan, was delighted with the use of the Diwali lights, and himself came over to express his pleasure and appreciation.

Hindu Intellectuals

After long days in finance committee meetings or wrestling with complex human problems of two civilizations superimposed, Fred spent many evenings with non-Christian intellectuals. As often as he could manage he spoke in their crowded town halls.

The Calcutta Brahmo Samajists were a particularly congenial group and he several times joined with them in celebrating the anniversary of the founder, Kasheb Chandra Sen's birthday. The society was founded by Ram Mohan Roy and carried on by Rabindranath Tagore's grandfather. Their wives and daughters long ago gave up purdah and caste and these men and women have been as free and as broadly educated as any upper class in any country.

Rabindranath Tagore was one of my husband's intimate Indian friends. When Fred visited the poet's university at Shantiniketan (Abode of Peace), as he often did, they had long talks about the poet's courageous educational policies. Tagore was obsessed with a great idea. Cecil Rhodes' great idea was to build an Anglo-Saxon Empire to dominate the world. Tagore's great idea was to build a university where students should be taught a cosmopolitan tolerance of all cultures and religions in preparation for future world coöperation. Tagore was first to introduce coeducation in India. He was among the first to try village uplift and to initiate agricultural experiments where the word "caste" is never mentioned.

When the poet's son, Rotindranath, was ready for college, Tagore selected the University of Illinois where he "expected democracy to be the vital environment and the labor of one's hand to be honored."

Fred was enthusiastic about Shantiniketan, and considered it an institution worth supporting. "Why not help this es-

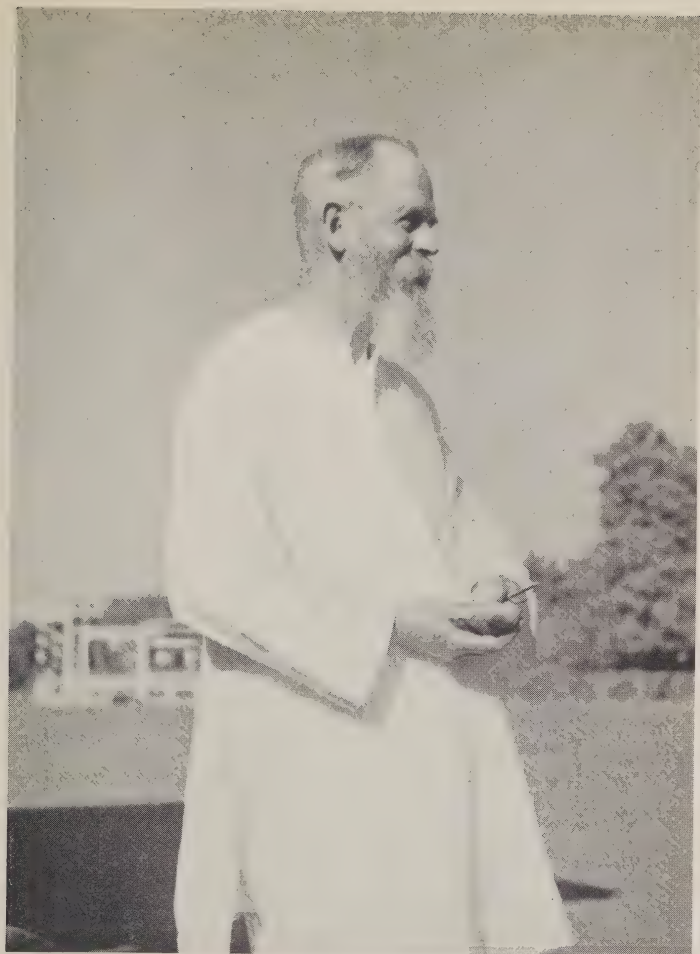


Photo by Mira Chaudhury

Charlie Andrews, the English Saint, Beloved by India

entially Indian university instead of building more American institutions?"

One day the poet said to Fred, "The Gaekwar of Baroda has endowed a chair of Hinduism and His Excellency, the Nizam, a chair of Muslim philosophy—but what of Christianity?" Fred's reply was to add to Tagore's faculty an American who would interpret Christian philosophy in Shantiniketan.

He appointed "on detached service" an American missionary from the Bengal conference, the Reverend Boyd Tucker. It was the first time any Christian body had coöperated with the poet. Fred had hoped to raise money at home to endow this chair, but it was one of the things that was not done and the coöperation was not long continued after he left the country.

Visiting India since Fred's death I met a representative of the English Friends' Mission Committee from London and was relieved to learn that the Quakers were supporting a teacher of Christian philosophy on the staff of Tagore's university, thus continuing the work begun by Fred.

Visiting the Poet

One morning a letter arrived from Rabindranath Tagore inviting Fred to spend the week end at his home "Shymali" at Shantiniketan. The two other guests were to be his friend, C. F. Andrews, the most beloved Englishman in India, and Mahatma Gandhi. Of these four men, two called themselves Hindu, though it is doubtful whether one could name Tagore's religion, and two Christian.

When Fred returned from this memorable week end, he chuckled, "I've been sitting cross-legged so many hours these days I'm beginning to like it." He tossed me a cushion and we lounged Indian fashion with the tea tray on the floor before us, while he gave me a vivid recital of everything that

had happened. I could picture the meeting for I had gone to Shantiniketan with Fred when he lectured to the students.

The poet's simple Indian house nestled among mango trees at one end of the campus. His son, Rotindranath, occupied the big house where he and his artist wife, Hemalata, entertained the important guests of all nations and races who came out of curiosity or in genuine admiration to pay their respects to the Nobel prize winner. But a poet could not submit to the conventional demands of such a life, even in India. He had his own *chota* (small) house, consisting of a large central room with rooms tacked on to each of the four corners, furnishing bedrooms and a study. The central room was open to the four winds of heaven. At the entrance, figures of male and female Indian peasants stood out in black bas-relief.

"We all arrived at different times," began Fred, telling me about it. "Charlie got there some time ahead of Gandhi and me. I'm all for Indian clothes in this weather, Han. Gandhi was the most comfortable of us all, naturally. Charlie was next, for he wore a thin silk Bengali shirt with tails flying to the breeze. Gurudev (the poet) kept to his graceful flowing gown; I went vestless, but somehow I just couldn't take off my coat. Shoes, of course, came off. We are convention-bound, we western men. I realized it in awful contrast these hot days."

"Yes, I know you were too warm, but were there no fans?"

"No," was the reply, "we just got used to it as we would in a village. A fan is disconcerting to thought when you have to wave it yourself."

"On with the story," I urged.

"Well, you know how well Brahmans treat guests. They treat them royally by treating them casually," laughed Fred. "We four men ate together less than half the time. Hindu civilization does not make a fetish of eating. Dining is so

formal and conventional in our Western world! This Eastern mode appeals to me. I could leave tomatoes and rice alone without it's being noticed! And if I wanted tea when tea wasn't served, I only had to speak to the servant.

"No, our fellowship was not at meals. We drifted into Gurudev's open room, I in my socks, the three others barefooted, and all sat on cushions, talking for hours on end.

"Saturday," said Fred, "we discussed the relation of India to the Empire and the problems of Indians domiciled or indentured in British dominions overseas, in South Africa, the Fiji Islands and other places.

Indians Overseas

"This whole matter of treatment of Indians overseas centers round the question of whether or not the British Empire intends to recognize Indians as citizens of the British Commonwealth. Does citizenship in the Empire mean what Roman citizenship did to Paul in the beginning of the Christian era? Does it mean anything at all? And if not, why not?

"At the sunset hour we took our several walking sticks and walked cross-country towards the sunset. Gandhi's staff was almost twice his height and was nothing but a rough branch of a tree. The poet carried a product of his own handicraft shop, the handle carved with the head of a peasant. Charlie's was a black ebony cane inlaid with ivory given him by a wealthy Indian friend. 'Too good for me,' he would say, but he liked it just the same. I had the stick that Lord Reading gave me when I visited him in Simla.

"We made an odd assortment—legs and sticks, striding off towards the sunset. I believe Gandhi could beat us all—if we had been in a walking race. That little giant's ninety pounds has every muscle counted and at work. He likes to talk while he walks and he gets into the rhythm of it, but the poet likes to stride on alone, so I walked with Gandhi. He

sent his love to you and hoped your ankle would soon be strong enough to keep up with me!"

That was like Gandhi. He never forgets people. In the midst of great political stakes, he remembers people and with love! I don't know why that should surprise us, but it does. Gandhi has also a greater sense of humor than most people suspect. At the Round Table Conference in London, Gandhi was expected to be a typical oriental with no sense of time and a large idea of his own importance. He was as punctual as a time clock. Often he had to wait for the English members of the committee. One day while waiting a newspaper artist asked the privilege of sketching him.

"How long do you think it will be," asked the newspaper man, busily drawing, "before you can convince England that India should have her freedom?"

Gandhi reached over for the crayon and gravely added to the half finished sketch of his own shaven chin a long whiskered beard:

"That long," said Gandhi with a twinkle in his eye.

Fred went on, in a lighter vein, telling me intimate things about Gandhi. "He sleeps on Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience*—'makes an excellent pillow,' " Gandhi laughed.

"We passed one of Tagore's cows from his new agricultural experiment station for the villages. It was a soft-eyed, well fed, high-bred bossy, and somehow it winked at us almost humanly. Gandhi pulled up some grass and fed it.

" 'Isn't she the best friend of man on earth?' asked Gandhi, patting her. 'Of course, I believe in reverence for the cow,' he went on. 'To me she symbolizes the basic teaching of our Hinduism—that all life is part of God.' "

Ahimsa

"Gandhi and I talked of the Ahimsa (non-violence) philosophy," Fred continued, "and how it happened that he

could popularize that doctrine into an effective weapon for India. We decided it was because Buddhistic attitudes had so deeply permeated the Indian background, although Buddhism, as a religion, had almost disappeared.

"Sunday was the great day of our week end. In the morning after our solitary meditations we casually drifted over to the poet's doorway."

"Just a moment, Fred," I interrupted mischievously. "I want to know truthfully how many of your odd assortment at the house party got up to pray with Gandhi at 4:20 A. M.?" Fred grinned at me sheepishly. I did not have to be told that Gandhi had prayed alone!

"It was Sunday," Fred repeated, "and we all felt like Sunday. The sky was a clear, hot blue. The locusts shrilled to announce more heat, but a reverent spirit brooded over us as Gandhi talked of God. Tagore talked of the Formless, lifting us as always to the Infinite. Charlie talked of the mystical Presence and I talked of the Living Christ in this modern world.

"As we entered we had noted the two bas-relief figures of the Indian villagers, male and female, on the gate pillars. These dark silent figures brought all of us, without premeditation, to the discussion of the outcaste.

"Gandhi has given the outcaste a new name, Harijan, son of God," Fred reminded me. "We all wondered whether the Harijan himself liked the name. Gandhi and Charlie both declared the outcaste did like it, but Tagore, equally concerned, wasn't sure they wanted to be named at all. I thought the new name was a good thing for out-of-the-country consumption and so I hoped it would take on. However, I appreciated the point Tagore made that to name them was to put them into another caste—a higher one, to be sure, but still a caste."

Fred was always deeply concerned about the outcaste.

Only a little while before, I had realized how close the whole matter was to him. He had been very ill with a fever of 104° and a high pulse and while he was delirious he kept repeating, "They never had a chance. They never had a chance!"

"Whom is he worrying about?" the Australian nurse asked me. "The outcastes," I told her.

"It was grand to remember," Fred went on, "when I was talking with Gandhi and Tagore, that Christian missionaries were the first to look into the eye of the outcaste and call him Brother! But how few of them have climbed out of their degradation, even in the mass movement. There lies the great task ahead of us. Gandhi and Tagore agreed with me about this.

"Those two great men are vastly different, yet at one in purpose. Tagore," said Fred, deliberately choosing his words, "is like—Mount Everest. He towers majestic and, I think, alone. He is, in some ways, far off—for he seems to be in touch with the Infinite. He seeks abstract Truth. Wherever he finds it, he makes it his own, adds to his stature as snows add to the glacial heights of Everest. But Gandhi—Gandhi—is like the leaping cataract on the mountain side trying to reach the stream to add his life to the parched stream below where the people thirst.

Hindus Discuss Idolatry

"When we talked about idolatry—Gandhi was completely vicarious. As he talked he became the pariah, the scavenger whose ancestors could not read nor write and whose children's children are doomed to that same hopeless future. Unless, as Gandhi told us, 'We four men, seated here, can arouse our worlds to white heat on the subject.'

" 'The outcastes' little piece of red-painted stone, used for an altar under the tree,' argued Gandhi with emotion, 'is



Photo by Mira Chaudhury

Tagore, the Inimitable Host

important.' You know, Welthy, Gandhi made us reverent before that crude symbol. 'That painted piece of stone is the only tangible symbol of God our half-starved brother has ever had. How can we deny him the only link between himself and God?'

"But Tagore could not let the Mahatma have the last word. 'You, Gandhiji, you and your Jain ancestors, long ago, left their chanting and singing and telling of beads. We all know full well that God is not only in the temple. He is there where the tiller tills the hard ground. He is with them in sun and in shower and his garments are dusty. The Bishop knows that his Master, Himself, the Living Christ became man to symbolize this identity and that he is bound with us all forever. But that does not mean He is the stone.'

" 'No,' ended Gurudev, the poet, 'if idols and idolatry, if beads and painted stones are not needed by us in this room, not righteous for us, then they are not righteous for any of our people, however lowly. I'd like to sweep up every idol of every kind, brass, wood, stone and alabaster, from every city and village—every temple and mohulla, and make one great heap from the whole country, and sweep them into the sea and so cleanse our stables!'

"We were all silent. It was a dramatic moment. The poet cleansing the temple! Then Gandhi became the outcaste himself, thinking their thoughts.

" 'You dare not take the crutch from a lame man's arm until you have taught the cripple how to walk,' Gandhi warned us quietly. 'That is the Bishop's task, it is Charlie's, it is yours, Gurudev, and it is my task!'

Fred and I nodded our heads and our eyes said, "So be it." Was not this the very task that had brought Fred to India?

"So long as we come to that conclusion, Han," Fred ended, "what does it matter whether we arrive there by the Hindu

or Christian path? Our Christian civilization has its untouchables, too. Until we Americans implement the citizenship we have nominally conferred upon the Negro our need for purging is as urgent as theirs."

CHAPTER X

TAGORE'S UNPUBLISHED POEM

Among Fred's papers I found an unpublished poem by the poet, Rabindranath Tagore. Fred treasured the poem which was given him by Tagore himself, and had planned to write an interpretation not only of it but of Tagore as a religious poet. Because of these circumstances it seems appropriate to include the poem in this account of Fred's life.

Rabindranath Tagore had become a world figure in 1913 when he was awarded the Nobel award for his poem, "Gitanjali." He made several trips around the world, lecturing and reading his works and had a large following in this country who read each new book of poems with keen appreciation.

Appearing at Carnegie Hall on one of his visits, he read this poem "The Babe" to a large audience. A few days later, he presented it to Fred, saying:

"I am sure that the poem is not mere literature to you, but that it conveys to your heart the living voice of a friend who has often sat by your side."

Tagore was not an orthodox Hindu. He accepted the monotheistic philosophy of the Brahmo-Samaj of which he was a member. Their beliefs are somewhat akin to Unitarianism. The Samajists are not Christians, however, and in the census, would be classified as Hindus.

The symbolism of the poem startled Fred in its unmistakably Christian inspiration, and Fred asked the poet:

"Does the Babe refer to Christ?"

"You may interpret it as you like," replied the poet, an enigmatic reply made less non-committal by the fact that it

was addressed to Fred. Obviously a Christian minister—if given leave—would interpret it as referring to Christ.

Fred read and reread the poem, and pondered on its imagery: "The stars cannot be wrong, their signal points to that spot;—The gate opens. The mother is seated on a straw bed with the babe on her lap."

Again speaks the old man, "We refused him in doubt, we killed him in anger, now we shall accept him in love, for in his death he lives in the life of us all, the great Victim."

The poet had told Fred that he might interpret it as he liked. Fred could not do other than read it as a tribute from the great Hindu poet to the Christ. The fact that the poet had presented the poem to him, and entrusted to him its publication served as additional evidence to Fred of the poet's intent. Amid the pressure of his crowded schedule, Fred never realized his dream of writing the introduction he had planned, but he would be happy to know of its being given to the world.

THE BABE

by Rabindranath Tagore

I

"What of the night?" they ask.

No answer comes.

For blind Time gropes in a maze and knows not its path or purpose.

The darkness in the valley stares like the dead eye-sockets of a giant,

The clouds like a nightmare oppress the sky,
and massive shadows lie scattered like torn limbs of the night.

A lurid glow waxes and wanes on the horizon,—

Is it an ultimate threat from an alien star,
 or an elemental hunger licking the sky?
Things are deliriously wild,
They are a noise whose grammar is a groan
 and words smothered out of shape and sense.
They are the refuse, the rejections, the fruitless failures of
 life,
Abrupt ruins of prodigal pride,—
Fragments of a bridge over the oblivion of a vanished
 stream,
Godless shrines that shelter reptiles,
 marble steps that lead to blankness.
Sudden tumults rise in the sky and wrestle
 and a startled shudder runs along the sleepless hours.
Are they from desperate floods hammering against their
 cave walls
Or from some fantastic storms whirling and howling incanta-
 tions,
Are they the cries of an ancient forest flinging up its hoarded
 fire in a last extravagant suicide,
Or screams of a paralytic crowd scourged by lunatics blind
 and deaf?
Underneath the noisy terror a stealthy hum creeps up like
 bubbling volcanic mud,
A mixture of sinister whispers, rumors, and slanders, and
 hisses of derision.
The men gathered there are vague like torn pages of an
 epic;—
Groping in groups or single, their torchlight tattoos their
 faces in chequered lines, in patterns of frightfulness.
The women weep and wail,
 they cry that their children are lost in a wilderness of
 contrary paths with confusion at the end.

Others defiantly ribald shaking with raucous laughter
their lascivious limbs unshrinkingly loud,
for they think that nothing matters.

II

There on the crest of the hill
Stands the Man of faith amid the snow-white silence,
He scans the sky for some signal of light,
And when the clouds thicken and the nightbirds scream as
they fly,
He cries, "Brothers, despair not, for Man is great."
But they never heed him,
For they believe that the elemental brute is eternal
And goodness in its depth is darkly cunning in deception.
When beaten and wounded they cry, "Brother, where art
thou?"
The answer comes, "I am by your side."
But they cannot see in the dark
And they argue that the voice is of their own desperate de-
sire,
That men are ever condemned to fight for phantoms
In an interminable desert of mutual menace.

III

The clouds part, the morning star appears in the East,
A breath of relief springs up from the heart of the earth,
The murmur of leaves ripples along the forest path,
And the early bird sings.
"The time has come," proclaims the Man of faith.
"The time for what?"
"For the pilgrimage."
They sit and think, they know not the meaning,
And yet they seem to understand according to their desires.

Dec. 5, 1930

My dear Bishop Fisher

I gave a copy of "The Babe" to Charlie Andrews to give it over to you which, it is evident, he has forgotten to do. I send you another copy by today's mail, for both Charlie and myself have decided that you should take it in hand and help it to be published. Macmillans asked me to allow them to publish it immediately before Christmas but I waited for the confirmation of your own acceptance. In the meanwhile

I have given a reading of it in Carnegie Hall and you ^{may} have heard that the audience was deeply impressed.

I shall be leaving this country on the 16th of this month not with much success but some wisdom of resignation. The obstacles are great and I don't know how to overcome them. My consolation is that I have done my best, often reaching the brink of a physical breakdown - and the disappointment itself is my sacrifice which, I am sure, has its own value for me.

I shall try to find out the manuscript of "The Babe" if it is still in existence. With my kindest regards to yourself and Mrs Fisher

Cordially yours
Rabindranath Tagore

The touch of the dawn goes deep into the soil
And life shivers along through the roots of all things.
"To the pilgrimage of fulfillment," a small voice whispers,
nobody knows whence.
Taken up by the crowd it swells into a mighty meaning.
Men raise their heads and look up,
Women lift their arms in reverence,
Children clap their hands and laugh.
The early glow of the sun shines like a golden garland on the
forehead of the Man of faith,
And they all cry: Brother, we salute thee!

IV

Men begin to gather from all quarters,
From across the seas, the mountains and pathless wastes.
They come from the valley of the Nile and the banks of the
Ganges,
From the snow-sunk uplands of Thibet,
From high-walled cities of glittering towers,
From the dense dark tangle of savage wilderness.
Some walk, some ride on camels, horses, and elephants,
On chariots with banners vying with the clouds of dawn.
The priests of all creeds burn incense, chanting verses as
they go.
The monarchs march at the head of their armies,
lances flashing in the sun and drums beating loud.
Ragged beggars and courtiers pompously decorated,
agile young scholars and teachers burdened with learned
age jostle each other in the crowd.
Women come chatting and laughing, mothers, maidens, and
brides, with offerings of flowers and fruit, sandal paste
and scented water.
Mingled with them is the harlot, shrill of voice and loud in
tint and tinsel.

The gossip is there who secretly poisons the well of human sympathy and chuckles.

The maimed and the cripple join the throng with the blind and the sick, the dissolute, the thief, and the man who makes a trade of his God for profit and mimics the saints.

The fulfillment !

They dare not talk aloud, but in their minds
they magnify their own greed, and dream of endless power,
of unlimited impunity for pilfering and plunder,
an eternity of feast for their unclean gluttonous flesh.

V

The Man of faith moves on along pitiless paths strewn with flints over scorching sands and steep mountainous tracks.

They follow him, the strong and the weak, the aged and young, the rulers of realms, the tillers of the soil.

Some grow weary and footsore, some angry and suspicious.

They ask at every dragging step, how much further is the end.

The Man of faith sings in answer ;

they scowl and shake their fists and yet they cannot resist him ;

the pressure of the moving mass and an indefinite hope push them forward.

They shorten their sleep and curtail their rest,

they out-vie each other in their speed,

they are afraid lest they may be too late for their chance while others be more fortunate.

The days pass, the ever receding horizon tempts them with renewed lure of the unseen till they are sick.

Their faces harden, their curses grow louder and louder.

VI

It is night.

The travellers spread their mats on the ground under the banyan tree.

A gust of wind blows out the lamp
and the darkness deepens like a sleep into a swoon.

Someone from the crowd suddenly stands up
and pointing to the leader with his merciless finger
breaks out: "False prophet, thou hast deceived us!"

Others take up the cry one by one,
women hiss their hatred and men growl.

At last one bolder than others suddenly deals him a blow.
They cannot see his face, but fall upon him in a fury of
destruction and hit him till he lies prone upon the
ground, his life extinct.

The night is still, the sound of the distant waterfall comes
muffled, and a faint breath of jasmine is in the air.

VII

The pilgrims are afraid,
The women begin to cry, the men in an agony of wretchedness
shout at them to stop.

Dogs break out barking and are cruelly whipped into silence
broken by moans.

The night seems endless and men and women begin to wrangle
as to who among them was to blame.

They shriek and shout and as they are ready to unsheathe
their knives the darkness pales, the morning light over-
flows the mountain tops.

Suddenly they become still and gasp for breath as they gaze
at the figure lying dead.

The women sob out loud and men hide their faces in their
hands.

A few try to slink away unnoticed, but their crime keeps them chained to their victim.

They ask each other in bewilderment,

“Who will show us the path?”

The old man from the East bends his head and says,

“The Victim.”

They sit still and silent. Again speaks the old man,

“We refused him in doubt, we killed him in anger, now we shall accept him in love, for in his death he lives in the life of us all, the great Victim.”

And they all stand up and mingle their voices and sing,

“Victory to the Victim.”

VIII

“To the pilgrimage,” calls the young, “to love, to power, to knowledge, to wealth overflowing.”

“We shall conquer the world and the world beyond this!” they all cry exultant in a thundering cataract of voices.

The meaning is not the same to them all, but only the impulse, The moving confluence of wills that reckes not death and disaster.

No longer they ask for their way, no more doubts are there to burden their minds, or weariness to clog their feet.

The spirit of the Leader is within them and ever beyond them—

The Leader who has crossed death and all limits.

They travel over the fields where the seeds are sown,

By the granary where the harvest is gathered,

And across the barren soil where famine dwells and skeletons cry for the return of their flesh.

They pass through populous cities humming with life,

Through dumb desolation hugging its ruined past,

And hovels for the unclad and unclean, a mockery of home for the homeless.

They travel through long hours of the summer day and as the light wanes in the evening they ask the man who reads the sky,

"Brother, is yonder the tower of our final hope and peace?"

The wise man shakes his head and says,

"It is the last vanishing cloud of the sunset."

"Friends," exhorts the young, "do not stop. Through the night's blindness we must struggle, into the Kingdom of living light."

They go on in the dark,

The road seems to know its own meaning and dust underfoot dumbly speaks of direction.

The stars—the celestial wayfarers—sing in silent chorus,
"Move on, comrades!"

In the air floats the voice of the Leader,

"The goal is nigh."

IX

The first flush of dawn glistens on the dew-dripping leaves of the forest.

The man who reads the sky cries,

"Friends, we have come!"

They stop and look around. On both sides of the road the corn is ripe to the horizon—the glad golden answer of the earth to the morning light.

The current of daily life moves slowly between the village near the hill and the one by the river bank.

The potter's wheel goes round, the woodcutter brings fuel to the market,

The cowherd takes his cattle to the pasture,

And the woman with the pitcher on her head walks to the well.

But where is the King's castle, the mine of gold, the secret book of magic, the sage who knows love's utter wisdom?

"The stars cannot be wrong," assures the reader of the sky,
 "Their signal points to that spot."

And reverently he walks to a wayside spring from which
 wells up a stream of water, a liquid light,

Like the morning melting into a chorus of tears and laughter.
 Near it in a palm grove surrounded by a strange hush stands
 a leaf-thatched hut,

At whose portal sits the poet of the unknown shore, and sings:
 "Mother, open the gate!"

X

A ray of morning strikes aslant at the door.

The assembled crowd feel in their blood the primæval chant
 of creation:

"Mother, open the gate!"

The gate opens. The mother is seated on a straw bed with
 the babe on her lap,

Like the dawn with the morning star.

The sun's ray that was waiting at the door outside falls on
 the head of the child.

The poet strikes his lute and sings out:

"Victory to man, the new-born, the ever-living."

They kneel down, the King and the beggar, the saint and the
 sinner, the wise and the fool, and cry,

"Victory to Man, the new-born, the ever-living."

The old man from the East murmurs to himself:

"I have seen!"

CHAPTER XI

MONSOON IN BURMA

Victory is not won by destroying other religions.

F. B. F.

As bishop, Fred was responsible not only for the Calcutta area but also for Burma. This may seem a natural grouping to the western world, where all orientals look alike physically and psychologically. But Burma requires a different set of brain cells. Buddhism, born and bred in India, has moved on into Burma, Ceylon, Siam, and points East, although practically extinct in India itself. So the Bishop from Calcutta, tuned in for the Hindus and Muslims of India, had to master an entirely different wave length for the Buddhist Burmese.

At first, Fred Fisher and I ferried across the Bay of Bengal for brief church conferences, and then we would hurry back to Calcutta, where Fred was absorbed in urging his church "to catch up with India."

On the Road to Mandalay

Our American missionaries in Burma felt neglected and complained that the Burmese was the true forgotten man—except for Kipling's song. Not even Kipling's much-baritoned verse proved accurate, however. We found no flyin' fishes and, facing the dawn "outer China," we looked into deep teak forests, instead of "'crost the Bay."

The Burma girl, true enough, waited for her Tommy Atkins by the old Moulmein Pagoda. Turning from the "great

gawd Budd" to be kissed by her Tommy, she often found that Tommy had vanished, leaving her with a baby of "buttermilk eyes" and Mongolian features, whom she would have to support unless a Chinese, Indian, or Burmese husband (preferred in the order mentioned) would adopt it. The only other alternative would be to take it to a Christian orphanage!

Fred was impressed by the motley character of Burma and tried to identify the contributions made by the Hindus, the Buddhist Burmese, and the Confucian Chinese. In race, the Burmese are a mixture of Aryan and Mongolian, a blend of Chinese and Indian blood. Burma's cultural background came from India, Fred used to say, while her cheek-bones came from China. The records indicate that Indians have drifted into Burma from the earliest days. They were on the little peninsula long before 150 B. C. when Asoka, Emperor of India, sent forth his missionaries to the adjoining countries, converting them to Buddhism. These Indian missionaries did a good job, for Burma was still eighty-five per cent Buddhist, and they had won not only Burma, but also Ceylon, Tibet, Siam, and China.

Asoka's Mission Board

Asoka's was probably the original Board of Foreign Missions. It found little opposition from the Burmese, saturated with animistic fears and taboos, and Buddhism gradually became indigenous to Burma.

Always in search of interesting walking sticks, Fred picked up from the Buddhist pilgrims some fascinating pilgrim sticks. From an old abbot at a Burmese monastery he secured an altar box, richly carved and covered with mirrors, containing one of the one hundred and eight books of the Buddhist Bible. It was written on palm leaves which had been highly lacquered in Burma red. The Pali script was written

in black lacquer, and the manuscript was elaborately decorated in gold. It must have represented a lifetime's work of some artist monk.

Fred prized most of all a nineteenth-century tray from King Thibaw's palace in Mandalay. It is made of horse-hair lacquer, spired like a pagoda, and covered with shining red lac and gold leaf. It looks like a gorgeous jewel casket, until the top is taken off, revealing the tray. It is one of our Pilgrimthorpe treasures.

Dissatisfied with our superficial knowledge of Burma, Fred and I decided to spend a monsoon season studying the people and the country because, although it would be neither cool nor comfortable, it was the only time available in a bishop's heavy schedule. Accordingly we crossed the choppy, monsoon-tossed Bay of Bengal on a little British and India steamer, starting our studies before we reached Rangoon.

We had five fellow-passengers as we set sail from the Outram Ghat, but on our way down the Hoogly into the bay the two Roman Catholic sisters and three washed-out looking Scottish businessmen disappeared as though a bugle had blown, never to emerge until the steamer took on the Rangoon pilot. Portholes closed and fans on, rain pouring, fog horns blowing, tarpaulins up, the decks were much too wet for walking and the air as heavy as lead.

Fred's typewriter came out, and ensconced in a corner of the dining salon he worked away as though the sun were shining. That summer, I remember, he was working on plans for the Indianization of his area, on his area bulletin, the "Calcuttarean," and his book, *Building the Indian Church*. His dream of an Indian Church seemed just around the corner. For my part, I studied books on Burma and at night would summarize my reading for him with the help of my notes.

Colorful Rangoon! Its saffron-robed, shaven-headed

priests roamed the streets tapping their symbolic wooden fish-heads carried in front of their stomachs. When the housewife hears that tapping, she runs out with a gift for the Pongyi, and no sooner has she disposed of one, than another comes along with a large black pottery bowl to hold all the rice and bananas and foodstuffs that her generous heart permits. The ministerial budget seemed irregular. Some Pongyis were fat, I noted, and some were thin.

The gay color of Rangoon offered a sharp contrast to some of our western cities, Quebec, for example, where the monks, priests, and nuns make a black picture. We saw laughing women here in Burma, no veils, no purdah, no child marriage, no gaunt child-widowhood. The contrast to India made us ask why? No caste. They were all homogeneous in standards apparently, in spite of their mixed blood.

Land of Buddhas

Buddha, we found, was God in Burma and was everywhere. Buddhas with grecian noses and Buddhas with negroid lips; Buddhas in placid Nirvana and Buddhas with eyes wide open, finger in preaching posture; Buddhas reclining and standing; huge figures and figures in miniature; Buddhas in rich gold leaf and crudely carved in hardy teak; Buddhas on the top of every hill, at every bend of the river, on every street. In Pegu we saw a reclining Buddha, 181 feet long. No village so poor but it had its pagoda and its Pongyi Ygaung.

The Burmese of the hill countries never completely yielded to Buddhism. They were Shans, Kachins, and Karens. These last, about a million people, had accepted Christianity in large numbers, and formed the nucleus of our Burma Christian Church. We were told that it was the Christian Karens who backed the British and helped them in 1885 when the "British field force crossed the frontier and advanced to Mandalay without incurring any serious resistance!" The

United Nations' experience in 1941 was a tragic contrast. For it was the Buddhist priests of Burma who furnished their co-religionists, the Japanese, such effective help that the Government of Burma was compelled to withdraw within a few days.

The Baptists in Burma

Even though he was a Methodist bishop, Fred was especially impressed by the fine and comprehensive work of the Baptist Church. The Baptists have been in Burma ever since an American missionary, Adoniram Judson, led the way in the year 1813. Fred Fisher, a practical believer in Christian unity, advocated, as early as 1921, turning over to the Baptists all our Methodist schools, hospitals, churches, and parishes. If he had had the power he would have seen that it was done. Of course, nothing so simple and idealistic could actually happen. Only a person like Fred would think it possible.

We explored Burma in our own way, searching the ruins of the past to fill in the background of the present. We went first to old Pagan.

"What! You spent four days at Pagan?" the British I.F.C. (Indian Forest Commissioner) shook his head incredulously. "Why, there is nothing to see in Pagan; you should have gone to Kyauk and to Yenan Kyaung!"

One glimpse of Kyauk and we saw it all. It was a replica of an Oklahoma frontier town that has struck oil. We visited Yenan Kyaung also, another crude oil town, where a chance meeting gave Fred keen pleasure. We met an American driller who had been brought up a Methodist in a little frontier town in Oklahoma. He had a Burmese wife and three fine boys. Would the Bishop baptize his boys? The Bishop would and did.

Now and then the curtains parted for an instant to give us

a tragic glimpse of West and East trying to work out the baffling problem of racial assimilation. One day at Pagan we looked across the river at a beautiful estate among the trees.

"Who lives in that lovely place?" my husband asked our Burmese guide.

"It is the home of a retired English forest commissioner, who lives there with his Burmese wife," answered our guide. "He can't take her home—well, you know, sir, what I mean. He *doesn't* take her home, but they live there very happily."

"What does he do with himself?" queried my husband.

"For one thing, sir," answered the young man, "he gets up at two o'clock every morning, turns on his radio and gets—London! And there he sits for four hours listening to the jazz and the vaudeville and music and the talk—all in his own native language."

Pagan's Pagodas

It is true that in contrast to the bustling little oil towns of Kyauk and Yen-an Kyaung, recommended by the I.F.C., the city of Pagan was chiefly dead ruins, but memories of the past bring those ruins to life. In the days of its grandeur, from about 1000 to 1200, Pagan was not only the capital of Burma but it was also the religious capital of the world. At a time when Europe was just beginning to build its Gothic cathedrals, Pagan's five thousand pagodas pierced the sky for eight miles along the banks of the Irrawaddy river. It was one of the wonders of the world, like our New York City skyline today. We tried to imagine it as it was in Marco Polo's time, when he looked back and saw the thousands of spires covered with gold leaf reflected in the surface of the lazy river.

Fred and I spent four happy days of study in a dak bungalow near Pagan. Our word pagan is probably derived from

this old city rather than from the Latin *paganus*. U Wilatha, ranking prelate and head abbot of the Buddhist monastery nearby, was our host. He was a tall, spare figure in his monk's gown of saffron. He had a shaven head, wore glasses, and had a twinkle in his eye.

What money raisers these abbots and hermits were! Fred, who had met with some success in this line, listened to him respectfully! The Abbot told us that he alone had taken on his shoulders the restoration of the Ananda Pagoda, which at once endeared him to Fred. For next to the Taj, the Ananda Pagoda thrilled Fred with its beauty. Restored to its original majesty, it was so perfect that Fred longed for a means of making it known to the world.

The Abbot took us also to the oldest Buddhist landmark in Burma, a pagoda built about the year 150 B. C. To our amazement it contained no images and was as chaste as a mosque. "And you will see, my Lord (they had heard the English bishops' titles), that there is no semblance of any graven image, or likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth," said the Abbot, gravely quoting our Old Testament, but with a twinkle in his eye.

Fred acknowledged the compliment with another question, "Can you tell me what kind of religion Asoka's missionaries found when they came here? Were the Burmese originally Hindus?"

"They were Animists—idolaters," answered the Abbot, and pointed to a little building the size of a doll-house, just inside the temple wall. "Within that little house were the idols for the humble, ignorant people who could not comprehend the high ethical standards of Buddhism. Asoka sent missionaries to preach Ahimsa (non-violence)—the gospel of committing the least possible harm and of doing the utmost good, and of practicing love, pity, truth, and purity of life.

There were no idols in any of our early Buddhist temples; they have gradually crept in."

"Your doctrine of Ahimsa is being used today by our Gandhi in India," Fred commented.

"Yes," replied the Abbot, "that wise Hindu has borrowed Ahimsa from Buddha."

We had a memorable talk with the Abbot. Other monks drifted in one by one, sat cross-legged on the floor, and joined in the discussion. Life in that monastery has changed very little in the seven hundred years since Marco Polo paused there to write his journal.

The Abbot and his monks appreciated Fred Fisher's visit as something unusual in the centuries-old annals of their monastery. He was not a Chinese Buddhist, rare visitors, but understood; not an Indian, held slightly suspect by the Burmese; not an Englishman, looking for plots and saboteurs. Here was a bishop of a church from one of the youngest countries on earth, that dream land of America that seemed as far away as Mars—and yet Fred was obviously a seeker after truth like themselves.

My husband was reluctant to leave them; they had reached a real accord. The old Abbot excused himself as we stood making our farewells, and brought out from his cell a precious golden Buddha made from wood of the Bo tree from Buddh Gaya, India. He patted it lovingly as he told us it had been brought to Pagan when the Ananda was built, in 1091 A. D. It was a small Buddha, heavy with gold-leaf. He handled it reverently, but he did not bow down, nor did the monks. We have given it an appropriate setting. It rests on a gilded Burmese bracket in our library at Hingham. It has come a long way, in miles and in years.

As the monsoon waxed violent, Fred's arthritis increased; the doctors had warned us that it would.

"Why did you let that man come back to this country and

this climate again?" the unsympathetic American physician fairly browbeat me.

But Fred, in the quiet hours of the night, would say firmly:

"I shall never leave India on account of health. I shall go when I think I should, not before."

So we continued our trip up the Irrawaddy, as far as the steamers would carry us, into villages, ruby mines, churches, temples, pagodas, visiting oil wells and schools, factories and hospitals.

We visited a tiny outpost, Bhamo, and found it crowded with temples and churches—a Sikh temple, a Hindu temple, a Buddhist pagoda, and a Pongyi Kyaung; a Christian (Baptist) church and a Christian (Anglican) church. Fred, laughing, said it reminded him of the towns of a dozen houses we had seen in our own middle west with a "Church of God" on one corner and a competitive "Church of Christ" on the opposite corner!

Bhamo lies in the heart of a teakwood forest. The teak was in flower and covered the mountain side, looking like smoke tree blossoms. The trunks tower a hundred feet high, but the leaves are the real pride of the teak tree; they are often a foot long. We drove out to the waterfall on the Sweli through a canyon cut out of this primeval forest of teak.

We spent our evenings on the old-fashioned boat. Every village on both sides of the river had its pagoda, and no matter how down-at-the-heel by day, at night the pagoda was outlined in incandescent lights, making a lovely tracery against the velvet blackness of the river and the forest. The Burmese were too poor to have electricity in huts or shops. In their shabby huts, a saucer with an oil wick might do, or at best a tin Standard Oil lamp, but every night the village pagoda must be gaily decked with lights.

One day we saw an old Buddhist woman supported by two daughters, slowly climbing hundreds of steps to an altar.

Part way up the trio rested at a shrine. The old lady knelt to pray. Before she began her prayer we saw her attempt to lift a sizable round stone from the altar. Gritting her teeth and grimacing, she tried, but no, she couldn't. She closed her eyes, rested her head against the shrine and began to pray. Her prayer grew louder and longer. After we had rested, we too knelt in prayer. Our God was everywhere, so why not in a Buddhist altar?

After perhaps fifteen minutes, we saw the old lady straighten up and lift the stone as though it were a baseball. Her sins were forgiven, the burden was gone, she was reborn. The old pilgrim rose, bowed to Buddha's image, then to her daughters, and then to us. The whole world was singing for her now. She turned and started down the many steps, looking years younger.

Fred said, "That's the Muncie altar, and I've just risen from it. It's the same experience, Han."

Burma's Nationalist Movement

Fred Fisher followed with interest the nationalist movement in Burma during the years between 1920 and 1930. The movement was bristling when he addressed the Burma Youth Improvement Society, and again in Rangoon when his audiences were made up of social workers, faculty, and undergraduates of the university. Burma was still politically a part of India and Fred had long talks with Mg Kyaw Men, the legislator who insisted even then on the right of the Burmese to decide whether Burma should remain with India and Ceylon or should become a separate political entity.

Other prominent Burmese political figures with whom Fred and I were well acquainted included: U Saw, later prime minister, and now in prison; Sir Paw Tun, the present prime minister, now in Bombay with the Burmese government, and

his Ohio-born American wife; U Maung Gale, who at that time occupied the highest post in the government secretariat granted to a Burmese. Fred Fisher divided his time between his official duties and getting acquainted with Burmese. It was congenial work, for he liked them, and the British government had paved the way by its insistence on the use of the English language in schools throughout the Empire.

Sir Paw Tun's American wife always amazed one by her complete acceptance of her Burmese framework. Her husband was a fine type physically and had an interesting mind, London-trained. He had the mentality and manners that England turns out from many races and nations, who talk alike and mostly think alike.

U Paw Tun's wife, a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University, had met her husband in London where she had gone to study theosophy. They fell in love and were married, and went to Rangoon to live. There she at once entered upon her colorful and changed life. Her husband's Burmese wife and three daughters lived nearby. To him, it was a matter of course, but how could it be to a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University? This American woman talked to us quite frankly about her situation. As a device for fitting herself into the paradoxical relationship, she referred to her husband's Burmese children as "my step-daughters," and she called his Burmese wife, "my step-daughters' mother."

There were practical compensations. When this Ohio-bred woman had difficulty with her Burmese cooks, "my step-daughters' mother" might send over a Burmese meal all ready to serve! The American wife was a lonely soul and did not miss a single one of the sermons which my husband gave night after night in Rangoon.

Although Burma wanted even then to separate from India, the country was divided socially and ethnically into three groups. Wherever we went, first the Burmese community

would give us a reception; second, the Indian community, because the Bishop's residence was in India; and third, the sturdy, realistic Chinese, never to be outdone by the other two, would also entertain us. At a reception in one Burma village a humble Indian Christian read to us this startling and amusing greeting:

"Welcome, generous expert gentleman, devoted to the cause of education. In my eyes there is a seat of beautiful tigers' skins spread for you. (In reality a bare teakwood chair!) There is adorned coronation seat in my heart for you. I will wash your feet with my eyelids and will give you bath with my tears.

"With my lips will I drink the water washed by your feet and will never be satisfied. The ocean of my heart is agitated and there arose the willows of pleasure in which there came out precious and attractive pearl lines. (Even Fred's imagination couldn't figure that one out!)

"O, my lord, I wish I should present it at your feet. Well, dear, speak, speak. What else I should bring for your worship?"

Among the Burmese intellectuals Fred seldom needed an interpreter. The leaders, U San Tun Aung, nationally known chemist; U Khin Maung, editor and director of government publicity; and U Them Maung, presiding trustee of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda—these and others provided a revealing cross section of the little country that is now in the shadow. They convinced Fred that Burma had a sufficient crop of intellectuals to look after its own affairs, both inside the Church and out.

A First Night

We received an unprecedented welcome on our arrival at Thongwa. We had settled down in the home of a Burmese friend, for Fred made a point of accepting Burmese and

Indian invitations in spite of some white sahibs' raised eyebrows. Buddhist elders of the city's shrine promptly called upon Fred. They had received instructions from the trustees of the Shwe Dagon in Rangoon to call upon the Christian bishop and offer their services.

They also had a request to make. They would be honored if he would be the first Christian to enter their ancient shrine, and be the first to speak in English there! He should speak as the spirit moved. A skilled interpreter would translate his words. Fred listened in amazement as the elder spokesman went on:

"We hear that your wife travels with you" (that in itself was a Western oddity) "and is also interested in our people?"

"Yes," was Fred's laconic answer, eager to have me share this thrilling experience but hesitating to commit himself at this first meeting on the subject of women. For he knew that not even Burmese Buddhist women, free as they seemed to be, had set foot in that holy place. The elder spokesman continued with his unorthodox proposal, though Fred assured me later that it was only up-country curiosity to see what such a woman would be like!

"The time has come," hesitated the spokesman, "for us to open our temples to our women. The appearance of your wife makes it an eminently fitting time for this change. The Memsahiba may bring her Burmese women friends who follow the Christ-truth and some of our Buddhist-faith women will join them."

We caught our breath. A Christian bishop and his wife in the holy of holies! At the appointed hour, we followed fitful lantern lights over the dark paths to the temple, where seven saffron-robed, shaven-headed priests met Fred. He paused at the threshold to loosen and slip off his shoes, so clumsy in comparison to Burmese sandals. As he followed the priests into the sanctuary I offered up a silent prayer from the outer

room where we women had been left, some standing, some sitting on the floor.

The temple was filled to the doors and the crowd overflowed into the courtyard. From the painted ceiling, princes and lords, saints and rishis, and previous incarnations of the Buddha looked down from their exalted positions at the Christian stranger in their holy of holies.

It was indeed a first night. The first time a Christian had entered the shrine, the first time English had been heard, the first time the Christian way of life had been presented, the first time the saffron-robed priests had used the Western form of shaking hands, the first time women had crossed the threshold.

From the courtyard, a colossal brass image of the Buddha, outlined in electric lights, looked quietly down as from Nirvana upon this incongruous scene.

"In this place is One greater than the temple," spoke forth Fred Fisher's mellow voice, as though he must fill us with a sense of the presence of divinity. I felt it, and before he had ceased talking I am convinced that these Buddhists felt it too, if only in his closing prayer when he prayed that more than one young man might that night be set apart for the service of his own country—Burma.

We were brought down from this exalted mood with a thump the next morning when we entered the railroad station in little Thongwa and my husband was greeted by a C.I.D. man (Criminal Investigation Department) who came to question him about his lecture in the sacred shrine the previous evening!

Another repercussion greeted us at a station further on. The senior American Methodist missionary sent word that "as he had two classes to teach that morning he would be unable to meet the Bishop!" He sent his mali (gardener) to look after us.

"It is too bad," mused Fred, "that these missionaries are so embarrassed at having their bishop followed by C.I.D. detectives that they do not even want to be seen meeting him at the station!"

No day in Burma was dull, but then with Fred Fisher no day was ever dull—Detroit, Capetown, Calcutta or Geneva. Fred was amused by the efforts of some people in Burma to explain why they paid their cooks twice what they paid their Bible women. After seeing the Bible women, however, Fred thought he understood.

He was also edified by some of the American spinsters' rules laid down for the Burmese Bible women on their pay roll. The Burmese who had lived near to nature for a thousand years could not, for the life of them, relate these rules to the Christian religion. They only knew that they must obey them and they did. One rule provided that when the spinster Burmese Bible woman married, she automatically ceased to be a Bible woman! We were reminded of some of our own American Boards of Education and their rules about married teachers.

Nothing Is Destroyed

Back in the sultry dak bungalow near Pagan, Fred Fisher sat for hours meditating aloud on these monsoon days in Burma.

"You have to thank God for Buddha, my dear," he said, looking across the Irrawaddy at the noble spire of Ananda glowing gold and white in the twilight, "when you survey this Asian world, and see the art and architecture Buddhism inspired, when you see the culture that Buddhist missionaries planted so long ago. It has dominated probably four out of every ten human beings in the world.

"You must remember another thing, Han, and you might put this down, that *you cannot utterly destroy anything,*

matter or spirit. Luther and his world-wide Protestantism could not destroy Roman Catholicism. It is stronger than ever. Greek Catholicism has not been destroyed by the Roman nor Mahomedanism by the Christian Crusades. We do not destroy each other. We can hamper and hinder and hurt temporarily, but we cannot destroy.

"Victory is not won that way," he mused, "Christ magnetizes. Christ does not antagonize. He heals. He draws out. He calls forth. He rebuilds.

"I would not want a world that was completely Methodist or Roman Catholic or Jewish. I would not be happy to live in it. My soul craves freedom and fellowship with people who disagree with me even as to our basic philosophy of life. I shall always treasure the memory of meeting with that Buddhist Abbot. We found a real accord."

That summer in Burma gave us an excellent perspective on organized Christianity and yet the mission in Bhamo seemed to us the quintessence of everything that was wrong. The Christian mission had been there fifty years. Yet the Sunday services were held in an ugly, high-school study room. The worshippers sat in old-fashioned double school desks, discards from the United States, and had to look at uneraser blackboards for inspiration.

Just beyond this ugly building Buddhist pagodas glowed with sparkling glass, gold-leaf, delicate ornaments of winged motifs, deep-toned gongs and soft tinkle of temple bells blown by the wind, making a Chopin Nocturne.

"Missions could turn themselves about in a twinkling if they would," grieved Fred. "With our magnetic message we should win this music-loving, beauty-loving people. Why are we Anglo-Saxons so static?"

There was nothing static about Fred. He was finding sensitive response and liberal minds among the leaders of Burmese Buddhism.

An Exchange of Religious Experience

Burma's best known philosopher, U Ba Sein, became Fred's friend on this trip. We had met him in Rangoon, when he came to hear the Christian Bishop lecture on "Constructive Freedom," and discuss the path towards personal and social release and growth. U Ba Sein was a mathematician as well as a philosopher. He earned his livelihood by compiling government statistics and after office hours delved into the old Buddhist scriptures in Pali. He presented Fred with one of his books, *The Mathematics of Buddhism*, and asked for a debate before we left Rangoon.

"No," said Fred Fisher definitely, "I never debate my religion, but, if you wish to present Buddhism at its best, I shall be only too glad to present Christianity. It will be a discussion of our faiths and an exchange of our religious experience."

"Certainly," agreed U Ba Sein, and so the date was set for the second night after our return to the capital, Rangoon.

That strange scene and the ensuing discussion is indelibly recorded in my memory. A thoughtful audience of eighty scholars were waiting in a sultry Burmese hall. They wore long skirts, short silk coats, and delicate kerchiefs tied about their heads. These were dignified Burmese who had refused to be carbon copies of the west. The head trustee of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda (the Westminster Abbey of Burma) presided. The Bishop, one Burmese Christian clergyman, and I were the only Christians, and I the only woman. I felt no embarrassment; my husband wanted me there and then, too, I had plowed through *The Mathematics of Buddhism* and was curious to hear what U Ba Sein would say.

It was conducted in quiet mellow English and at first it seemed like a Quaker meeting. The mathematician had covered the walls with his charts and was positing within the

Buddhist circle the evolution of the race, the present scientific era, and the future of the universe. His discourse was so technical that he was soon beyond my depth. When he turned to astronomical and physical realms, his mathematical formulae were more understandable. He turned back again and again to Planck's Constant Pi , as if he were relying on it to prove his spiritual circle. However, it was the Constant Pi that provided Fred his opening.

Fred picked up the religious and scientific argument at the point where U Ba Sein had left it, and wove it into a complete spiritual fabric. Using the Quantum theory as the most significant element in Planck's discovery, my husband cited the law of the radiation of energy and the law of coördination and response in nature. He showed how these physical laws illustrate and support our belief in divine energy emanating from God and its appropriation by human personalities. Fred Fisher, the student of Bowne, posited in the very heart of the circle the Divine Living Christ.

Finally Fred discussed the divine mind or personality behind the universe. He challenged Buddha's claim not to have seen or found any God. Fred, the Christian, quoted Christ's intimate knowledge of God and Christ's revelation of Him as the world's creator and man's father.

The little electric bulb lighted the faces of the two protagonists until long after midnight. A gentle breeze from the river broke the sultry stillness. The dignified elders would willingly have continued the discussion until dawn. I felt as though I had been a silent listener to Paul on Mars Hill: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship him declare I unto you."

One of the greatest scholars present was profoundly

moved. At the end he rose and said, "The ethics presented here tonight by this Christian bishop have almost persuaded me that a good Christian is better than a good Buddhist."

This was the climax of our days in Burma.

CHAPTER XII

WHITE AUSTRALIA POLICY

The white man was on the upper end of the seesaw,
And the brown man with his burden was down.

F. B. F.

My husband and I spent a summer in Australia during the winter of 1925! When it was 120° in Calcutta, it was snappy winter in Melbourne. In spite of the upside-down climate, the Australians made us feel very much at home. And they gave us a good deal to think about. We found an awareness of world trends and currents which, in the light of recent events, takes on a tantalizing significance.

Mr. Fletcher, Editor of the *Sydney Herald* said to us—and this was in 1925, sixteen years before Pearl Harbor:

"If the Chinese or the Japanese once make up their minds to enter any or all of our northern ports from Darwin on east around the Gulf of Carpentaria, and from Darwin west through the Timor Sea into Hyland Bay or into a hundred other ports whose names we scarcely know, not even the British Navy could keep them out."

"But," said my husband, "surely the British Navy is giving you better protection and security than that."

The First Paratroopers

"It isn't that the British do not protect us, but these orientals know how to smuggle themselves past every barrier," the editor explained. "They will cross the ocean in any old tub and come ashore on an open beach without benefit of ports of entry. When they do get here, they make even our most

dried-up plateaus blossom into a garden. I'll tell you what I mean. Not so long ago our census-taker was looking for orientals, reported to be living in our Northern Territory, and lo! there they were, settled, tilling the soil. When he found them out in the fields they were bent over planting rice. He shouted at them:

" 'Hey, what's your name? Where'd you come from?'

" 'Me?' the oriental half straightened up and pointed to the sky. 'Me drop down heaven!' "

This was long before paratroopers had made dropping down from heaven a literal fact.

"That's just the way they'll do it," continued the editor. "They'll drop in here as though from heaven and we won't be able to keep them out. But don't think we're giving up the White Australia Policy. We'll keep it for our generation anyway and after that, who knows?"

High Lights from the Notebooks

In preparation for this trip, we had devoted every free minute for months in advance to reading about the land down under. Fred's notebooks contain many entries which illustrate his lifelong habit of systematic and laborious preparation for any new experience. The Australian notes are headed "May, 1925, Darjeeling." Then follow quotations and summaries from the Encyclopedia, books, magazine articles, newspaper clippings. They begin with general items:

"Physical: only continent entirely in the southern hemisphere: greatest length 2400 miles, width 1927: . . .

"Salient features:

1. compact outline,
2. no navigable rivers to interior,
3. no active volcanoes,
4. no snow-capped mountains,

5. isolation from other lands,

6. antiquity—already dry land when vast tracts of Asia and Europe were submerged.

“Population: mainly British origin. . . .

“Education: widely distributed; compulsory for children. . . .

“Agriculture: essentially pastoral. . . .

“Mineral: one of the greatest gold producers in the world. . . .”

The last heading, and the one to which he gave most space was:

“Aborigines: origin difficult problem. Represent a distinct race, not related to Malays, Polynesians, etc. Probably Dravidian (Indo-Aryan). Evidence of isolation in customs and manners:

“Number steadily decreasing; probable maximum since discovery 200,000:

“Customs—do not cultivate soil nor build substantial houses or huts: no pottery, bows and arrows, canoes; only weapon—boomerang;

“Extremely primitive; linguistic poverty; great variety of dialects, numerals limited;

“Physique—equal to average European in height, inferior muscular development:

“Disposition bright, laughter loving, but treacherous, untruthful; hold life cheap; no courage. Food—prey, seeds, roots, grubs, reptiles; no crops, no cattle;

“Mentally—in condition of children;

“Religion—no special form of worship; no idols; animistic; only idea of God, gigantic old man lying asleep for ages with his head resting on arm which is deep in sand; expected to waken one day and eat up the world;

“Use sorcery, scars raised on body, knocking out of teeth, circumcision.”

It was these aborigines whom Darwin particularly wanted to study when as a young man of twenty-three he made his historic trip on the *Beagle*, landing at Sydney in 1836 almost a century earlier.

Fred also was eager to observe the aborigines, although he did not make them his primary objective. As we drew into frontier railroad stations in the interior, Fred would be on the lookout, and would call to me—"Look Han, here's one, there's another—here's a whole group of them."

Fortunately for Fred, the aborigines have found that throwing boomerangs for the tourist trade is a fairly painless way of making a living. Fred never tired of watching the uncanny flight of the dark wooden arc which suddenly doubles back in its flight like some live thing that has changed its mind, to drop obediently at the feet of its master.

Fred took many pictures of the aborigines and was only sorry that he could not linger long enough to pick up some of their dialect and be able to talk to them. He was interested in comparing them with groups of aborigines of the same Dravidian stock in India and found many similarities of appearance and customs.

Hospitable Australia

Both Fred and I were particularly impressed with the cordial hospitality of the Australians. Someone has said that they consider themselves more English than the Americans, and more American than the English. Sharing the qualities of both, they constitute a liaison group, well fitted to interpret the two to each other. We found unswerving loyalty to the British Empire, but also a particularly friendly attitude to the United States.

We were fortunate in timing our tour of Australia to coincide with a visit of an American Fleet to Australian shores. Looking through our notebooks, many of the com-

ments and incidents sound strangely familiar. They have recently been duplicated in accounts of the wartime welcome given our forces by the Australians who have been their hosts through 1942-43.

Under the command of Admiral Coontz, in this summer of 1925, fifty-five of Uncle Sam's warships sailed into Australian harbors to pay a friendly visit to this only English-speaking race in the Pacific. The flagship *Seattle* and some of the men-of-war came into Melbourne with eleven thousand men, while the larger part of the fleet with twenty-five thousand men went to Sydney, where, in that incomparable harbor, the largest cruisers could lie alongside the pier and still be in the very heart of the city.

For weeks before the fleet arrived, we read columns in the papers and magazines about what the boys liked. "American recipes"—"What the American blue-jackets eat"—became familiar headings. Then as now, the press was printing on one page "Aussie's slang: An easy handbook for a gob"; and on the opposite sheet "A page of gob's slang." President Coolidge praised Admiral Coontz's speeches as having helped to cement the friendship of Australia and the United States. But Fred believed that even more important was the mere fact of sharing a common mother tongue. When about forty thousand men understand their hosts' everyday speech and when as many men on the street understand the idioms and wise cracks of forty thousand visitors, the first step in international friendship has been taken.

Never were visiting nationals entertained more lavishly or with more sincere hospitality than were these forty thousand Americans by the Australians. From July 23rd to August 6th, the people of the Commonwealth cancelled all other engagements and held themselves in readiness to share in welcoming our fleet. All kinds of people prepared all kinds of entertainments for all kinds of American boys. The gov-

ernment gave state dinners to the Admiral and the officers and provided ample entertainment for the blue-jackets.

Every type of organization participated in the welcome—the men's business groups, the women's clubs, social, civic, political associations. We had come to visit the churches and colleges and they were all en fete for the occasion, besides which, we found ourselves caught up in a whirl of parties and receptions and excursions in honor of the visiting Americans. It was almost as though we had become part of the fleet.

An American had only to express a wish to find it gratified. Mrs. Coontz, who met her husband, the Admiral, in Melbourne, one day happened to remark that she had read about boomerangs but had never seen one. Before she could say Jack Robinson she was whisked into a motor and off into the bush. As if by magic there stood one of the aborigines waiting to do his stuff.

Fred was amused by the mascot incident. One day the Melbourne *Argus* printed an item that some of the boys on the flagship *Seattle* thought they would like to have a kangaroo as a mascot.

At seven the next morning, a motor truck and a small car drove down the pier. In the truck was a full-grown kangaroo; in the motor car were two wallabies, an animal resembling a small kangaroo. To cap the climax, the driver put his hand into his pocket and pulled out a baby kangaroo no bigger than a kitten.

Fortunately Fred's versatile interests did not include kangaroos, for, if they had, we should have undoubtedly been faced with the problem of the care and feeding of pet kangaroos. Fred was delighted, however, to receive a substantial and appropriate addition to his collection of walking sticks. Our host in Melbourne, Mr. F. J. Cato, presented him with seven; each one was interesting in itself and was made of a different Australian wood.

We landed in Perth and crossed the country by Pullman, changing trains as we crossed the borders of three of Australia's provinces; she has six altogether. In the early pioneer days, they laid their railroad tracks without mutual consultation, only to find that each had used a different gauge track so that the cars of one province will not fit on the tracks of its neighbors. We passed Kalgoorlie and the mines where Mr. Hoover as a young engineer once dug gold.

Tasmania—The Never Never Land

We made a little trip to Tasmania, a pearl of an island visited by few Americans. It is about twice the size of Belgium and is a fairyland of beauty. Fred always looked forward to the day when the people of the United States would discover the Pacific Ocean and its islands. The experience of our boys in World War II which has already made the Solomon Islands and Guadalcanal household words will undoubtedly bring about just this greater familiarity and wider interest in Oceanica.

Fred was stirred to discover that the Hobart Methodist Church in which he preached had been founded by a convert of Bishop William Taylor, the six-footer who had preached in Philadelphia holding an African baby in the crook of his arm. He had been one of Fred's boyhood heroes and had served as bishop in India in the eighties.

We had planned to visit the Fiji Islands, and Fred's notebooks include extracts from a letter describing a "Keep Fiji Clean" movement, "an appeal to Europeans, half-caste and Fijian natives to form a league so that Asiatics (including Indians) should be debarred from landing and from holding land in Fiji under any tenure whatsoever."

We never reached the Fijis, however, because of labor troubles. Labor, which has a reputation for independence throughout Australia, was just then putting on a series of

strikes among the longshoremen. The shipping men, while they could provide passage to the islands, said we might be held there indefinitely by strikes. Fred discreetly decided not to run the risk.

Melbourne for business, Sydney for gaiety, Adelaide for culture, Tasmania for beauty, and still we felt that we had not adequately seen the country. Last of all, we went out back of beyond into the great ranches where flocks of hundreds of thousands of sheep make the big business of Australia.

These ranchers are a distinctive group, well informed as to what is going on in the world, cosmopolitan, great travelers. Many of them were educated in England—which they, like the rest of the Empire refer to as “home”; they send their daughters back to be presented at court. They build beautiful homes and they entertain, giving big dinners and week-end parties; they keep up the gracious hospitable home life traditions which are characteristic of English country life.

Fred was charmed with their passion for tea, as it was his favorite drink. In several homes where we were entertained, tea was served seven times a day: the servant brought a cup of tea to our bedsides before we were up in the morning, like the Indian chota hazri; tea for breakfast; mid-morning, the women and any men who might be at home stopped for a cup of tea; tea for luncheon; afternoon tea; tea for dinner; last thing in the evening before the guests left a servant wheeled in a tea cart with sandwiches and hot tea.

The Laughing Jackass

Fred who was a great lover of birds had been intrigued in his preliminary Australian reading by accounts of a bird with the grotesque name of the laughing jackass. Visiting on one of the great ranches, Fred mildly inquired at break-

fast one morning whether this bird was to be found in the neighborhood. As soon as breakfast was over we were bundled into a car, and set out across country to track down the bird in question.

Suddenly the car stopped. "There's one now," said our host and he jumped out of the car and set off on a dead run towards a clump of trees in the distance. Fred, who had shorter legs, followed at his best speed and the two men, bouncing over hummocks and ditches, suggested the footless chases of our slapstick movies. The likeness was heightened by a deafening burst of raucous laughter. True to the tradition of Australian hospitality, the laughing jackass was letter perfect in his part, and gave us a performance which Fred always liked to remember with a satisfied chuckle.

We found that the very word, rabbit, was taboo, and they are not mentioned in polite society. Ranchers are held responsible for keeping their ranges cleared of rabbits, and are fined for every one found alive. They have it all figured out: in a year two rabbits eat enough green stuff to support one sheep, and the wool on a sheep is worth at least one pound sterling per year. The prejudice against rabbits is so keen that they are not even served as food. They are considered vermin and no one could stomach them.

Beware the Japs

We brought away from our delightful round of visits and our many hours of stimulating conversation two main impressions, the memory of two themes which had most frequently been the subject of discussion and which chiefly impressed us during this visit of 1925. First, that the Japanese were increasingly unfriendly to Americans, and that the antagonism might rise to open aggression. The Australians are very conscious of the Pacific Ocean and of those Pacific

islands which are mere dots on a map to most of us in the United States. They had an awareness of the menace of Japan which makes our own blindness on the subject up to December 7, 1941, seem the more remarkable.

White Australia

Second, we found almost every conversation coming around at some point or other to the White Australia Policy. They rose stoutly and unanimously to its defense, and parried possible criticism by challenging our Negro problem as involving far more serious consequences.

Fred forced them into definitions. What is the White Australia Policy, he wanted to know. Boiled down it seemed to come to this. Although Australia is a continent in the southern Pacific almost surrounded by yellow and brown and black races, ninety-six per cent of its inhabitants were white Anglo-Saxons, and they intended to maintain this ratio.

India has two major race problems; the problem of the outcaste within Hinduism, and the problem of adjustment between the white British Empire and brown India. Because of the dominance of racial questions, both in India and the United States, Fred was perpetually turning over in his mind this Australian angle of the universal racial question. *Why*, asked Fred should there be only six million people on a continent as large as the United States? *Why* were all the faces he met pure Anglo-Saxon? *What* was to become of the vast unpopulated spaces in the western and northern territories, where people are so few and so scattered that the census-taker, even on a motorcycle, could not find them all?

Instead of our "Go West, Young Man," the Australians used to say, "Go North, Young Man." They humorously admit, however, that after the young men had taken one look at the torrid wastes which lie in the Equatorial Zone

they turned around and went back south. They admit that only the intensive agriculture of the patient oriental could make these desert wastes bloom. Yet they maintain their bars against all Asiatics.

This was the gist of Fred's conversations with editors and college presidents, professors and churchmen, as he put himself into the Asiatic's skin and looked at the Pacific Ocean, at its continents and islands with his Asiatic telescope.

White Australia answered stubbornly, "We will not allow southern Europeans to come here as you Americans have—and therefore we shall be homogeneous forever!"

"You mean as long as you can hold to your rigid White Australia Policy—which may be a shorter time than you think," Fred Fisher replied.

Fred found the students at the Universities of Melbourne and Adelaide as eager to discuss world problems as those of Columbia or Lucknow. They realized that it was their generation that would have to face the results of their current policies.

"A delightful people, strong-willed, well-educated, high minded," Fred commented as we came away.

A Tribute

An article written by a prominent Australian Methodist, the Rev. J. W. Burton, which appeared in the *Indian Witness* and the *Christian Advocate*, summed up the impressions which Fred left behind him during his tour of the island continent:

"To Australians a Methodist bishop is somewhat of a curiosity, and we scarcely know how to treat him. To an ordinary bishop we give respect after the casual manner of our race, secretly smile at his gaiters and apron, and with democratic reluctance address him as "My Lord"; but a Methodist bishop dresses like the rest of us, and lordly titles

do not appear to fit him, so we halt and hesitate and finally pounce upon 'Doctor' as the most suitable form of address. And no one can possibly go wrong in calling an American cleric by that name.

"It was a great joy and privilege to many of us to meet Bishop Fisher of the Bengal Area of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He came unheralded, and entered without ostentation our life, so that we took him to our heart at once. He showed himself friendly, and he could have made any demands on us after that. We found him a strong, lovable, human sort of man, with a piquancy of speech, a touch of humor, and a widely roaming mind that ever knew the direction it was taking. He talked to us in his frank, easy, almost laconic way about the big things of the world that were upon his heart and little by little there was revealed a man of broad culture and of a daring mind, disciplined by much experience to practical use. Yet with it all there was a gentle humility which softened even the most challenging and critical thing he said, and made us feel that he came to learn even though we had but little to tell him.

"And we liked Mrs. Fisher just as much and saw in her the best type of 'college woman,' a type that America alone produces. Being also a wise woman she allowed the spotlight to rest mainly on her husband, though now and then there were flashes of independent thought that made us feel that even a bishop is molded by his wife."

After Fifteen Years

In 1940, after Fred's death, a remote echo of our long-ago visit to Australia reached me. The Methodist Church of Malvern, South Australia, celebrated its semi-centennial by publishing a record of notable events in its history. In this record they included the visit of Bishop Fisher, with a tribute to his memory.

It gave me pleasure to find that fifteen years after our visit to Adelaide they mentioned two things about his visit that I should most want them to remember. One was his love of children. He never had any children of his own, but he had that genuine, ardent love of young people, which children instinctively recognize and to which they respond with spontaneous affection.

The article also commented on his sermon. It spoke of his interpretation of international relationships and the universality of the Gospel of Christ which was in truth the major theme of his whole life's ministry.

"The visit of Dr. Fisher, Methodist Episcopal Bishop of Calcutta, was one of the great days of Malvern Church. . . . His sermon was one of remarkable power. His eloquence, his spiritual passion and arresting personality thrilled the congregation as few preachers are able to do. The wide sweep of his vision of the Kingdom of God, the clarity of his interpretation of international relationships, gave to the worshippers a conception of the universality of the Gospel of Christ.

"But those who had the privilege of even a brief fellowship with him recall his radiance and charm of manner. He and his wife lunched at the parsonage and were immediately at home. He was a great lover of children, and at once had the children of the home clustering around his knee as if they had known him for years. This friendly man and his beautiful wife were most charming people. Looking back one remembers him for the greatness of his mind and the simplicity of his spirit."

CHAPTER XIII

INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

It was nineteen days due west across the South Seas without sight of land from Adelaide to Durban. For we went on from Australia to visit South Africa. An albatross followed the ship and we all watched it and quoted "The Ancient Mariner." Some time the third night it left us.

Ever since Fred came out to India as a young man, he had suffered from a tendency to arthritis. His condition had been aggravated by the damp climate until it had become chronic. He was a stoic and refused to give in, although at times he was so crippled that he could scarcely walk.

We relaxed and enjoyed the sea air, and lay in our steamer chairs late in the evening, looking up into the star-studded skies with the southern cross hanging low on the horizon. But we maintained a fairly strict schedule of working hours on all our travels. Fred's program did not permit him to take time off for travelling. Every morning bright and early found each of us at a typewriter. Fred was writing his notes for the *Church School Journal*, interpreting the next half year's Sunday school lessons. I was doing a series of articles on Australia for *The Classmate*, the weekly journal of our Young Peoples Societies.

Our nineteen uninterrupted days on the steamer offered an exceptional opportunity for dieting. This appealed to Fred, not only to relieve his arthritis, but because of his tendency to overweight. He asked the steward to give us a table for two and we had the luxury of dining alone for the entire journey. We appreciated and were often deeply

touched by the hospitality which awaits a bishop on his travels. We should have missed it and felt that something was radically wrong if we had not found these gala welcomes. And yet, everyone who has held public office knows the weariness of perpetual entertainment, of making up polite small talk at every meal, of being forever on parade.

So we revelled in almost three weeks of tables for two. As we took our daily constitutional round and round the decks, we decided what we should talk about at dinner that evening: the varieties of birds we had each seen in Australia—which ones were found in India and which were not; another evening, we reviewed the varieties of Australian trees and fruits, comparing them with those of India and Ceylon; one evening Fred gave me an extempore lecture on his pet aborigines, and his theories about the sea gypsies. We had not begun to exhaust our topics when the voyage was over and we were landing in Durban.

Welcome to South Africa

We were met at the docks by a large group of Indians. They garlanded us with flowers, saw us through the customs and escorted us to the hotel driveway. Here they halted and bade us a dignified farewell. We learned later that Indians are not allowed in the hotels except as servants.

"We are in no position to be critical," sighed Fred. "We do the same thing in our own country. Will the Anglo-Saxon never learn that other men should be free to talk to their friends, no matter what the color of their skins? How can the Christian Church tolerate such conditions? Can't they get up the momentum to exert pressure on our legislators and our governments? It is the so-called Christian governments who are the worst offenders."

My husband, as a friend of India, was received warmly by all kinds of Indians—Christians, Parsees, Hindus and

Mahomedans. When he went to pay his bill after several days at the luxurious hotel in Laurengo Marques, "Your bill is paid, sir," the hotel cashier told him. "It was paid by your Indian (Mahomedan) friends."

We found the African missionaries doing inspiring work but against that backdrop of imperialism. Although he was an alien, the white man had appropriated the term, South African, and the black man was known merely as a "native." Even the churches considered the natives outsiders.

"The native is at the bottom of all our troubles in South Africa," said a Dutch Reformed minister to my husband. A kindly Methodist parson unconsciously rattled the skeleton in the closet when he said, "You see, Bishop, we are not a conference, and we cannot afford to form a ministerial conference until we are sure of a 'white' majority."

The Color Line in Church

An illuminating experience Durban provided when my husband preached in the Wesleyan Church. Indian friends, Muslims, Hindus, Christians, and Parsees, met us early, just outside the building. Fred disappeared with the clergyman into the sacristy to prepare for the service. I told the usher that I wanted to sit with these Indian friends instead of with Sir Liege Hewitt, with whom we were to dine later in the day. The usher, conferring on me the title proper to the wives of Church of England bishops said:

"These coolies will have to sit on the back seat, Lady Fisher, and it is only out of deference to the Bishop, that we permit them to come at all."

"Then I will sit on the back seat with them," I answered, glad that my husband had been spared this un-Christian side-light before he entered the pulpit.

Some years earlier we had found it difficult to believe stories told us by C. F. Andrews about a visit to Capetown.

He had been travelling with Gandhi, already famous throughout South Africa as a lawyer, statesman and saint. After calling upon the bishop and dean of the Cathedral who were friends of Charlie Andrews, they all set out together to attend a church service. The dean's wife remarked to Gandhi in a stage whisper, "The only way you can get in is to go with us!"

Gandhi tolerantly chuckled over the incident. But we knew that this attitude was driving Christian Indians out of the Christian Church!

In Pretoria, we met a large Indian family, migrants from India. The eight children, from ten to twenty years of age, were handsome, well-dressed, and doing well in school. They had left India a devout Christian family, and my husband asked what church they attended here. The father looked embarrassed,

"Bishop Sahib," he hesitated, "I—we—you see when we arrived here we all spoke English and no African, so we went to the English Church. But—well, we were not welcomed. We could not go to the African native churches for we could not understand them, so—now—Bishop, we go to the Muslim Mosque."

"All of you?" asked my husband, sorrowfully.

"Yes, all of us. There, all races are the same."

Although Fred usually refused to ride in a ricksha in India, he used them freely here. In contrast to the undersized, undernourished ricksha coolies of southern India, these South Africans were husky lads who swung along the dusty roads as though they enjoyed it. They wore feather *halas* about their heads, much like the feather headdress of the American Indian. This gay band of feathers waving in the breeze added to their care-free appearance.

It was interesting to see the impact of the different races on Africa. The white sahib had put the African women into

hideous blue-calico Mother Hubbards. The Muslim Arab swathed them in black. The Indian had given them color and they revelled in it.

"Look at the women of Beira and Laurencio Marques where the Indians outnumber the whites, and see the gay Indian prints those women wear!" Fred Fisher would say as we tramped and drove through the villages of Rhodesia.

Wives and Plows

Visiting the mission churches of Rhodesia and Portuguese East Africa, we came to the village of Inhambani and learned a bit of folklore.

When the missionaries first arrived, a man's wealth was estimated by the number of his wives. Whereas in Australia a man was known as owning so many sheep, here they said, a man had so many wives. After the missionaries introduced the use of the plow, they observed a tendency to reduce the number of wives, and even to become monogamous. On inquiry, they found that the natives considered a plow to be worth ten wives, that is, it did as much work as ten wives had done—two plows, twenty wives. The man who was provident enough to own a plow could dispense with ten women, and all those extra mouths to feed. He could get his work done with plows, and was glad to content himself with one wife. The story sounds apocryphal yet it is one of those half-serious, half-facetious tales which form the folklore version of dry economic laws.

At Phoenix, Natal, we naturally visited Gandhi's son, Monilal, who still lives in the Tolstoy Colony founded by his illustrious father.

It was not a Shaker colony, not a monastery, not a faddy group but a wholesome gathering of families of all creeds and castes who lived and worked coöperatively together. It was not unlike the work-camps, recently established by

the American Friends Service Committee. Gandhi had set the example by putting his barrister's hands to manual labor to earn his daily vegetables.

What Gandhi, the lawyer, made in fees—and they were said to amount to thirty thousand dollars in our money—Gandhi, the servant of all, had shared with the Indians of the colony. By the time we arrived in South Africa, my husband found their lips sealed about caste or any barrier of creed that might separate them. Mahomedans and outcastes, Parsees and Baniyas, they had discovered that in South Africa Indians would hang separately if they did not hang together.

Folklore

My husband was deeply stirred by the African music. "Elemental humor and their music are two contributions they can make to our drab, Anglo-Saxon Christianity," he used to say—"if we will let them."

We heard some African music that we remembered when we visited Victoria Falls, whose proper name, according to the Africans, is "The Smoke That Sounds." The fissure which sends forth the smoke that sounds is four hundred feet deep, and the vapor rises another two hundred feet, so that people on the Zambesi River see it as much as eleven miles away. In one of the kraals along the river, Fred heard a familiar strain reminiscent of "Swing low, sweet chariot, comin' for to carry me home."

He was talking to the chieftain, a big man wearing only a loin cloth whose body shone like black satin. My husband asked him through the interpreter:

"What is the song your village people are singing?"

"That is a legend, sir."

"I'd be glad to hear it."

"It goes like this," said the big man.

"That song tells of one of our ancestors who was the king of all this region, sir, the best king our people ever had. As he grew old he grew wiser. It was the custom, sir, for an old chief, when he was about to die to get into his bark and, slipping down the river, go quietly over the falls into 'The Smoke That Sounds.' This good king was not old enough to die, but his eldest son was eager to reign. So he helped his father into a bark, gave him a push and waited to see him go over the brink. The old man was singing: 'Come down, angels, and take me. Come down, angels, and take me!' And when the bark went over the falls it was empty.

"The good spirits, they came and took him up quick as a sunbeam, into the rainbow which was bending right over the falls. That rainbow caught the good old man up, and sometimes now he still wanders through the smoke and the forest, and sometimes he paddles down these waters. Yes, sir, that is the song you hear, 'Come down, spirits, and take me.' "

Fred told this story one evening to William Arms Fisher of Boston, who happened to be editing a volume of Negro spirituals which included "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." Mr. Fisher used the story in his foreword, thereby relating one of the wistful harmonies of our old-time plantation Negroes to the aboriginal music of Africa.

We agreed that the most thrilling performance of the Hallelujah Chorus we ever heard was deep in the interior of Africa. At Salisbury, Rhodesia, my husband had preached to six hundred black men and women Christians.

"Have I a message for these village people?" he asked me, almost pathetically. He was sure of himself among the intellectuals, but these people baffled him.

"You never talk down to them," I told him. "They may not get the full significance of your words, but they never

mistake your spirit. They look you in the eye, and by the time you have finished the benediction, they have grasped something of your message."

At Salisbury, after speaking to the six hundred, Fred had baptized the pastor's baby. Fred took all babies into his arms tenderly and they always smiled at him. At the close of the service he kissed the shiny black baby and I could hear a rustle of pleasure run through the audience. Then eight young men stood and led the six hundred in singing the Hallelujah Chorus. Some of the singers had torn shirts and ragged trousers, and only one wore a collar. But how they sang!

"Handel wrote that chorus on his knees, Han," Fred said to me later, "but it's the first time I ever heard it sung that way."

Zanzibar

One of the last places we visited was Zanzibar where the sweet smell of cloves blows far out across the sea to welcome the traveller. It is one of the most picturesque ports in the world. But it has sinister associations for the thoughtful American, because it was the principal port for the slave trade to this country. Fred and I stood beside the old slave block, which now forms an altar in the Roman Catholic cathedral, and our Indian guide told us the sad story of the Arab traders with their dhows, ships with pointed prows and sterns. They would go back into the interior and, showing the people handfuls of trinkets, lure them outside their stockade to look at the glittering baubles. While the natives were engrossed with these wonders, an Arab assistant would slip through the trees, and set the village on fire. Then the slave traders had little trouble in driving the panic-stricken people to the coast and herding them on board the waiting boats.

Even as late as 1859, Arab pirates had locked the American consul in his house, and kept him blockaded all day, so that he would not interfere while they drove hundreds of slaves through the town to the docks.

So we travelled up and down South Africa, visiting mines, sugar plantations, factories, kraals and native villages, with a passing glimpse of the Boer colonists settled in their homes on the veldt.

Anti-Asiatic Bill

We were not mere sightseers, however. Fred had come to study the unhappy effects of recent anti-Asiatic legislation upon the Indian settlers. Gandhi as well as Tagore had urged Fred to make the trip.

In order to appreciate the situation one must remember how the Indians happened to be in South Africa. British sugar planters found that the African Bantu, a nomadic people, did not make good farmers. They had no notion of being tied down to the land. They would not stay put. So the planters sent to India for indentured laborers. The recruiting agents would hold handfuls of glistening gold before the simple Indian villagers and tell them that South Africa was a land flowing with gold and prosperity.

The agents used thumb prints to sign the contracts, as the Indians could not write their names, and they soon secured boatloads of laborers. According to their contracts, after completion of one or two terms of service, Indians could purchase land and settle as permanent citizens of the new country. They saved, they purchased land, they planted vegetables and sugar cane. They prospered. But they were not permitted to become citizens. Instead, they faced the threat of losing even what they had earned.

At the time of our trip, India was deeply stirred by a new anti-Asiatic Bill which had passed its first reading in the

Pretoria Parliament. It provided for the strictest measures of racial segregation in residence and trade. The Cabinet member who wrote the bill stated that the "Indian is an alien element in the population and no solution of the question will be acceptable to the country unless it results in a very considerable reduction of the Indian population."

"But," argued Fred, "this Indian alien had been invited to Africa! Was not the white cabinet member himself also an alien?"

"One alien element now in power," my husband fumed, "is determined to exterminate another alien element, now politically helpless."

The Prime Minister, J. B. Hertzog, told my husband that he had never had much contact with the Indians, but he favored making the union of South Africa a contributing factor in the British Empire. His policy would be to uphold the Empire traditions—and he was complacently convinced "that little matter of the Indians would soon settle down."

The Mayor of Durban did not mince matters, but faced them with the realism of the practical politician.

"This anti-Asiatic Bill has not a leg to stand on ethically," he said, "but ninety-nine per cent of the white people are in favor of it, and we shall adopt it (which they did) regardless of ethics. It is a matter of the preservation of the white man," the Mayor continued. "My children will not be able to compete with these successful Indian traders. And what the whites cannot do through fair competition, we must do through restrictive legislation."

Frank, indeed. Even the poor whites who depended on the small Indian shops for their low prices told Fred that when the racial issue was at stake, public opinion compelled them to vote for the "White Policy."

"So the Indian, sensitive and successful, repeats the ex-

perience of the Jew in Europe, he is knocked about from pillar to post and driven into ghettos," mourned Fred.

Report on Indians in South Africa

"Indians in South Africa," Fred called his report. It was published in India and mailed to all Christian bodies in India as well as to the secular press. It was read and discussed by educated Indians throughout the land.

The Metropolitan of India, Dr. Westcott—the Anglican Archbishop—who lived a few blocks from us, and C. F. Andrews, who was in and out of our house like a member of the family, had spent hours on end with Fred, sometimes at the Bishop's palace, sometimes at our home, discussing the situation and the Christian community's responsibility. These two Christian Englishmen were determined that the Viceroy should have this latest report on South Africa from Fred, a neutral American and an unofficial observer.

Ever since the Partition of Bengal, thirty years earlier, it had been the custom for the Viceroy to spend the gay Christmas week in Calcutta, the former capital, at Belvidere. During this Christmas week of 1925, Lord Reading read Fred's report. He sent for Fred, questioned him and discussed the situation for two hours. I remember Fred's coming home for our twelve-o'clock tiffin.

"Lord Reading is a fair-minded person who wants to hear all sides," said Fred, "he wants me back at Belvidere at four." And Fred went back for another hour of illuminating discussion.

"The newly proposed anti-Asiatic Bill intends to take away the well-earned land which the Indians have acquired," wrote Fred Fisher in his report. "A strip thirty miles back from the sea is to be confiscated. Let him who has a conscience answer whether this is justice or perfidy! 'Scraps of paper'

has become a favorite expression of the Anglo-Saxon race of late, and perhaps it has got so thoroughly into our consciousness that we propose to make our own solemn contracts nothing but scraps of paper! But let it not be forgotten that where nominal Christians break contracts of this character and are supported by government legislatures in parliaments opened by Christian prayer, they will have to answer to the conscience of Hindus and Mahomedans for their actions and will stand condemned at the bar of enlightened public opinion."

White Prestige

Fred was called on to make many speeches on his impressions and his report. On one occasion he spoke to a large mixed group of western business men and Indian intellectuals. As usual, he did not pull his punches. Afterwards he was sharply criticized by some of the white sahibs.

"As a bishop," they said, "you have a right to present the ethical implications of this anti-Asiatic bill, and to expose the sins of the white man. However, we strongly object to your talking about it in front of Indians themselves. It is going to work havoc with the prestige of the white race."

I recall one incident in connection with our return from South Africa which provided a certain humorous relief. On our arrival at the port of Bombay, English and Indian reporters met Fred, primed with questions on the storm brewing over the South African legislation. Fred tossed over to me the homely details of getting our luggage through the Bombay customs. We had arrived with walking sticks from Australia and Africa to the number of seventeen.

"Do these all belong to your husband?" asked the inspector with an accent on the *all*. Not knowing who we were, he obviously suspected that we were going into the cane business.

"Yes," I replied, "they all belong to him."

"But some of them are very valuable and—" persisted the inspector, "no gentleman has more than two walking sticks."

Hastily I took the inspector on a tour of the walking sticks. These were given to my husband by a chieftain on the shore of the Zambesi River; they had been a symbol of his power in the days before the arrival of the white man; one of solid ivory, another picturesquely carved, this rosewood with a crocodile handle, and this one with a rhinoceros horn for a handle. The inspector, manlike, wanted to try each one in his own hand. By the time the reporters were through with Fred, the sticks had all been passed, free of duty. His collection was saved!

CHAPTER XIV

HE RESIGNS THE BISHOPRIC

Exactly ten years from the date of his election to the episcopacy, Fred resigned this high office on May 15, 1930. It is scarcely necessary to say that Fred had not reached his decision easily.

"It has taken three years," he wrote in his journal in July, 1930, "to get the courage to brave the criticism that might attend withdrawal from the Episcopal office. The decision was reached in mid-April, release came May fifteenth—a decade to a day since my election at Des Moines, Iowa. It is as though life starts all over again—with all the thrills of boyhood hopes—yet the artlessness has given place to a peculiar sense of direction and purpose.

"It is a holy thing to have this consciousness of open gates and ascending road. Only purity of motive and courage of action can meet this call. But I dare not moralize upon it. I must just gratefully, fearlessly, confidently accept it!"

Fred had accepted the bishopric with misgivings. He was never sure that the necessities of his temperament, the compulsions of spirit under which he functioned were suited to the responsibilities of the episcopacy. He was intimidated by the very thought of the power of the office. He realized that we must have organization, and that there must be people to administer organization. Fred himself was a magnificent organizer for certain types of work—money raising, membership campaigns, nationwide appeals in which he could address vast audiences and reach the hearts of the Methodist people whom he knew and loved.

The Weight of the Purple

But the deliberate exercise of power, as it is administered by a bishop, did not attract him. He had observed the insidious effects of the right to use power upon strong men both within and without the Church, and with characteristic humility, he feared its possible effects upon himself. Soon after he was elected bishop he had said to me:

"Welthy, if ever you see me using power for its own end, let me know. I'm going to give up the power right then and there."

In an article for the *Christian Century* he pondered on this theme of the mysterious effects of power:

"Those who wield power," Fred wrote, "are in constant danger. It affects not only those who are ruled but the ruler himself. I gradually became conscious of the almost unparalleled power of our episcopacy. Most [church] officers have strong convictions in principle or policy. If one is in a minority he is impelled almost unconsciously to augment his personal influence by the application of official power. He wins many a victory, but often loses inwardly by weakening his holy dependence upon the free expression of truth buttressed by logic and persuasion. Especially is this true in moral, spiritual, and educational vocations."

To Be Or Not To Be A Bishop

Several months prior to the General Conference of 1928 Fred wrote an article which appeared in *Zion's Herald* on February 1st of that year, entitled "To Be Or Not To Be A Bishop." He began with the statement that this was going to be an autobiographical discussion of the Methodist episcopacy. And in the second paragraph, he confessed that at the end of his first four years as bishop, he had attended the General Conference at Springfield in 1924 "with a well-

written letter of resignation in my pocket. I say well-written because I had studied the matter through many months and had recast the paper several times." He said that he had allowed a few close friends to dissuade him from presenting the resignation, but he added that he had several times regretted this action.

After this intimate opening, Fred continued with what has been termed a brilliant critique of the dangers and liabilities of the position of bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church. He also presented some constructive suggestions for remedying these weaknesses.

He discussed a recent editorial on the episcopacy which had suggested three episcopal sins: first, receiving special fees; second, following the line of least resistance; third, having judgment influenced by rich and powerful men. Fred brushed these aside. He did not consider that they went to the roots of the difficulty, and he knew full well that none of these applied to him. In fact, with regard to the second—following the line of least resistance, "I sometimes wish," he wrote, "that my chin would allow me, once in a while really to follow some easy-going line of judgment and action." He then analyzed the demoralizing influences of the position and, with characteristic frankness, confessed what he considered to be his own besetting sins. He mentioned first, irritability, and cited instances. But the difficulty which really concerned him was, as always, the use of power. He said that he had sometimes at the close of an annual conference, when he had had to use his authority, wanted to re-assemble the conference, ask them to elect another chairman and help them to find a method of transacting business which did not depend upon episcopal authority. Fred was consistently democratic. He believed in the democratic process for the Church as well as in government.

Throughout his tenure of the bishopric he had struggled

over the difficulties of an equable use of power. In this article he summed up his efforts to satisfy his own exacting conscience in a paragraph, which has an autobiographical ring. He wrote: "The vows taken by a bishop when consecrated; the type of decisions he must make in his administrative and judicial capacity; the unmerited praise he receives; the unjust attacks he suffers; his constant living in the limelight and away from home; plus his sense of security—all these things make the episcopacy a dangerous position for any man. He who can maintain sweetness, poise, democracy, humility and true Christian self-abnegation under all these circumstances is truly great."

Too Much Power

He concluded his indictment with brief simplicity, "the fundamental difficulty is that the Methodist episcopacy has too much power."

He presented two possible remedies. First, he suggested numerous detailed changes; taking away the bishop's appointive power, limiting his tenure in any area to eight years, making him responsible for receiving all new members into the church, etc.—all changes directed towards reducing the bishop's administrative power and increasing his spiritual responsibilities. Second, he suggested that every bishop should approach the next General Conference with complete willingness to lay his resignation upon the table, and that they submit to a vote by the entire Conference as to which ones should continue effective and which ones should retire or accept pulpits.

This was not iconoclasm, and it was not mere restlessness. This was the functioning of the very qualities which made Fred's services valuable, which made him a great and inspiring leader, which marked him out as a man of genius. In any work with which he was associated he was obliged to

analyze it, to put it under the microscope of his keen, remorseless probing, and whatever results he found he must use for constructive suggestion and action.

Personally Fred had only affection and respect for his associates on the Board of Bishops. He enjoyed his work with them, and there was no criticism in his heart when they did not see eye to eye with him on plans and policies. But the misgivings he had felt before assuming the responsibilities of the bishopric had only deepened as the years passed, and he became convinced of the importance of changes and of a modernization of the episcopacy in the best interests of the church to which he gave his unswerving loyalty.

Another autobiographical passage in this article, written in 1927, indicates that he was already mulling over the course of action which he was to follow three years later. "Personally," he wrote, "I think I should like the experience of being an ex-bishop, taking a local church, and attempting to see whether, by the personal merit of one's life, one could again achieve helpful influence uncoupled with this unprecedented power. Sometimes it seems that one's life is immediately changed by his election to the episcopacy. From that moment darts of criticism and suspicion begin to gather around his head; and the effect of these darts is not softened by the episcopal halo. One is placed in a small group of conspicuous men where each must accept responsibility for the acts of all. It would be interesting to feel again the thrill of independent service, and of a purely personal relationship."

Indianization of the Church

Coming out to India in 1904 as an inexperienced young minister, he had dedicated himself to two ideals to which he gave lifelong allegiance; the basic importance of the individual and universal toleration.

Long before he returned to India as a bishop in 1920 he had worked out the practical application of those ideals to fit India's particular needs: building up an indigenous Christian Church.

As bishop he made the Indianization of the Church his primary objective.

He saw clearly what needed to be done. As far as a bishop could use his power to develop self-leadership among his people, he had done so. He had appointed Indians as superintendents, as clergy, as lay officials, and he had conferred upon them maximum responsibility and authority. Every sermon that he had delivered had been a prayer that the leaders of his people would take matters into their own hands, would accept the power and authority he was urging upon them. He wanted them to take the initiative in making the Church their own. He wanted them to adapt it and remold its forms and rites to suit the Indian and oriental mood, as no westerner was capable of doing for them.

He made his first official pronouncement to the Indians in his Calcutta area a promise that when they could unite on an Indian bishop and elect him, he would resign and hand over his area to them. In those days an Indian bishop must be elected at the General Conference in the United States after nomination from the floor. Technically, he would be a missionary bishop, having jurisdiction over a limited area.

Churches Win Indigenous Conferences

A Commission of twenty-five had been appointed by the General Conference of 1924 to democratize the administration of the Church in foreign fields and give it larger power of self-government. The Commission was headed by the able liberal, the editor of the independent *Zion's Herald*, Dr. L. O. Hartmann. Fred presented what he had to say on the

subject in a pamphlet, "Which Road Shall We Take?" which was widely read and discussed just previous to the appointment of this Commission.

It was appropriate that Fred Fisher was presiding over the General Conference on May 16, 1928, at Kansas City, when the order of the day was the report of the Commission on Central Conferences. The subject was dear to Fred's heart. He believed that the changes recommended would help to secure self-determination for the Methodist Church throughout the world. Negroes in the conference were keenly interested, as were the South American delegates and those from China as well as India. As a result of the adoption of the Commission's report on that day Fred envisioned for all churches in the mission field a heightened sense of responsibility, mounting self-respect and a wholesome trend towards an indigenous organization.

It was at this same General Conference in 1928 that Fred told the Committee on the Episcopacy that he felt he had made his full contribution to the work in India, that he had given it all he had to give as a bishop. For the future, he could see only routine repetition of the pattern already laid down. It was work which did not challenge him and for which he felt that he was not fitted.

It was not that Fred's interest in and affection for India had lessened in any degree. He loved India always. He discussed the possibility of resigning the bishopric and staying on as a missionary. He considered with enthusiasm plans for building an ashram along Indian lines, and making it a center of discussion, teaching and stimulus for all Indians interested in the message of Christianity. There were practical considerations in the way. Fred felt that he could not very well serve as a missionary in an area where he had exercised the power of a bishop. It would be difficult both for him and for his successor.

The Committee on the Episcopacy listened to what Fred had to say, but they did not agree with him. They reappointed him for a third quadrennium to the Calcutta area. We accepted the decision as God's will and turned our faces back to Calcutta. Fred said to me that he was going back with just one string to play on his harp—the more complete Indianization of the Church, and to that he would devote his full powers and efforts.

For the next two years Fred gave himself completely to this work. He made increasingly broad contacts with Indians representing all castes and religions and political groups. In 1930, after a decade of concentrated effort on building an Indian Church, he had largely realized this ideal in the centers under his jurisdiction. All the delegates to the 1928 General Conference from his Calcutta area had been Indians. This was the first time in Methodist Church history that an Indian area had elected an entire delegation of its own nationals.

Make Their Own Mistakes

In the meantime Fred had reached another decision. He was convinced that only by handing over responsibility to the Indians, and leaving them free to make their mistakes, could their leaders learn how to guide their Church and make it their own. He believed that this was the method to follow in both political and religious fields. It became intolerable to him not to live up to this conviction which he had reached so painstakingly.

"No outside nation ever has, or ever will have the wisdom to solve another nation's problems," he said. "No one can ever learn to walk for you."

Perhaps he did not have enough patience. But Fred was never the man for plodding routine. His genius lay in freeing his imagination to survey world currents, take the long-range view of probable future trends, and plot lines of action on the

basis of his intuitions. The Church had early appreciated his genius for leadership and his exceptional capacities. As a very young man, and throughout his ministry, he had received generous recognition of his services.

Gradually, but consistently, Fred's searching of his heart and mind for the true interpretation of his duty was pointing in one direction. Finally, after this additional two years of effort he felt that he must take the decision into his own hands. He decided to notify the Board of Bishops who met in Boston in May, 1930, that he must resign from the bishopric.

My husband, after ten years in the episcopacy, was still the youngest bishop on the Board. So when he addressed them, he wrote, with Puckish humor, "Dear Fathers and Brethren."

This was the first time a Methodist bishop had resigned voluntarily from his office for reasons other than health and had returned to the pulpit. It seemed to some inconceivable that a man on the sunny side of middle life (he was forty-eight), with apparent health and good standing, should of his own accord step out of a life position that carried with it privileges, emoluments, pensions, and opportunities for service.

Non-Juring Bishops

But such resignations were not unusual in other denominations where the bishops retain their title but are assigned to the duties for which they feel they are fitted. They are technically known as non-juring bishops. Fred's warm friend in Calcutta, Bishop Packingham-Walsh, of the Anglican Church, caused no stir when he resigned his diocese of Assam and became dean of the theological college in that city. C. F. Andrews, a close friend of both Fred and Gandhi, had come out to India as an Anglican priest, about the same time as

Fred and, after a few years of association with the Indians, had gone to his bishop and asked to be relieved of his parchments. He had decided he could best serve Christ and India by becoming a lay servant to the Indians.

The rumor has been passed about that my husband was requested to leave India. Visiting India in 1939, I noticed that an American missionary, the head of one of our colleges there, consistently introduced me as Welthy Honsinger Fisher, instead of Mrs. Fred Fisher. He explained one day, in answer to my inquiry, that he had understood that I should not have been permitted to enter the country if I had used my husband's name! You may be sure that I took pains on all occasions while in India to sign my name Mrs. Frederick B. Fisher, even in personal letters when the use of my own name would have been customary.

Probably the American missionary was thinking of his guarantee given when he went to India that he would do nothing to impair the interests of the British Empire. The Indian patriot looks on the completely pro-Government American in India as an enigma but, on the other hand, takes warmly to his heart the sympathizer with his cause for freedom.

Krishnilal Shridharani in his recent book, *My India, My America*, says: "Once in a while we receive a man of great courage and character from among their [missionaries] ranks, and on rare occasions some of them become sterling champions of India—men like C. F. Andrews from England and the late Bishop Fisher from the United States."¹

Shridharani speaks of the fact that "even American missionaries have to mortgage their right of free judgment and free conscience to the British before they are allowed to enter India." . . . "Now and then there are noble examples of defiance like Bishop Frederick B. Fisher of Detroit, who sympathized with the nationalist cause and befriended

¹ *My India, My America*, by Krishnilal Shridharani. Duell, Sloan and Pearce, New York, 1941, page 338.

Gandhi and Nehru. He was thrown out of India.”² This is all quite true except the last sentence. My husband never received a suggestion or even a hint from any official that he withdraw from India.

Missions of the Future

There were equally ridiculous rumors that Fred Fisher had ceased to believe in missions. On the contrary, he believed we were on the threshold of our greatest achievements in missions. Not long before the end he wrote:

“The modern missionary is face to face with problems far more vast than the missionaries of any generation have ever faced. In the old days, men and women went out to what they regarded as the backward sections of the world to preach and teach a superior religion to an inferior people.

“Today the whole world has become a unit where each section is fairly well known to every other section, and where each race is quite well acquainted with the sins and the virtues of every other race. The sense of superiority has, therefore, largely vanished among all modern missionaries and teachers in Christian schools abroad.

“The scientific approach towards truth is perhaps the greatest contribution which the modern missionary movement has made to the non-Christian world. If religion and social customs and economic conditions are approached from the standpoint of true scientific investigation and correction, then we have the best possible setting for the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Under the title “Portrait of a Possible Missionary,” the *Christian Century* quoted approvingly Fred’s vision of this missionary of the future.

“The time is coming,” said the Bishop in effect, “when a church, wishing to aid in the development of other churches

² *Ibid.*, page 344.

on other continents will go into its community and pick out the best men and women whom that community contains—men and women with long records of strikingly successful service behind them. . . . This will be the missionary of the future.”

The article continued:

“Bishop Fisher’s prophecy is worth considering . . . because of the man who made it, because of the present agitation on mission fields and within mission boards as to missionary service, and because it gives voice to a concrete new idea in a period when ideas are becoming increasingly hazy.

“It has been acknowledged for years among missionary workers and missionary executives that the old type of missionary is no longer wanted, at least on developed fields. . . . For ten years it has been said that there must be a change in his functions. He must cease to be the acknowledged leader, the unquestioned ‘boss’; he must become the self-effacing adviser, the man who makes his contribution unobtrusively and often indirectly.”

A Cablegram

On our way home from India in 1930, with Fred’s resignation determined upon, written out, and locked in his brief case, we stopped over in Paris. There we found a cablegram from Dean Edward H. Kraus of the University of Michigan. The Dean asked for an appointment as soon after landing as possible, and would the Bishop please designate the city. My husband did not know Dean Kraus, but he had taught me German in Syracuse University days. My comment was:

“No doubt he would like to come to India and perhaps give a course of lectures at Calcutta University.” This seemed a fair guess. We knew little personally of Ann Arbor, or Michigan, and never dreamed of an invitation to the Bishop to take a pulpit. While Fred was presiding over the North

Indiana Conference in April, 1930, he met the Dean in Muncie who startled us with a proposal that the Bishop should come to their university town of Ann Arbor and take the Methodist pulpit! In a month we had agreed to this startling request and by September we were there.

Supply Preacher

Bishop Nicholson, of the Detroit area, appointed a "supply" to the church in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in September, 1930, by the name of Frederick Bohn Fisher, and Fred remained as such for two years until the General Conference of 1932 made his resignation from the bishopric retroactive.

Fred and I found a touch of comedy in our supply-preacher days when he received innumerable circulars and letters urging him to buy books and complete his conference courses of study so that he could pass his examinations and become a regular minister.

Fortunately for Fred's peace of mind as he swung into his new job, the Board of Bishops of the Methodist Church took the matter of his resignation with surprising equanimity. The report in the church papers of the bishops' meeting in which the resignation was discussed, said:

"On the whole Bishop Fisher decided wisely. He has worked long enough in India to put his stamp on the movement towards Indianization—a policy to which he has been devoted—and he has forced India upon the consciousness and conscience of the Church at home. The entire discussion in the Board was marked by fine feeling and excellent temper. There was no trace of recrimination towards anybody or anything."

The Board of Bishops expressed itself unitedly as follows:

"In addition to the formal action taken by this board with reference to the request of Bishop Fisher, the bishops wish to record an unqualified expression of affection for their col-

league. We have greatly enjoyed his ten years' association with us, and have had great pride in the wonderful magnetism and earnestness which he has consecrated to the missionary platform and programme. We have the fullest confidence that he is now acting in harmony with his conscientious conviction in his decision to surrender the office and work of a bishop. Loving him in the most brotherly way, we wish him a most prayerful Godspeed as he goes to take up some other form of service for the Master's kingdom."

The Indians themselves accepted Fred's resignation reluctantly, but they knew that wherever Fred was, his heart would always be in India. Dr. Joshwant R. Chitambar wrote of Fred's resignation:

"Fisher believed in the Indians and in the possibility of India becoming a great nation, great enough to take her deserved position alongside of the nations of the world. The result was that our Hindu and Mohammedan compatriots also looked upon him as their friend and a friend of India."

Happily Fred's pledge to have an Indian bishop replace him was carried out by the election of this same friend, the Rev. J. R. Chitambar in the autumn of 1930. When Bishop Chitambar died in 1940 he was succeeded by the Reverend S. K. Mondol, who was elected at the Central Conference at Delhi in 1941. Both of these men had been leaders in our Calcutta area.

Thus Fred's ten years in the bishopric were rounded out and some of his hopes fulfilled.

CHAPTER XV

NEW TASK

When Fred settled down in Ann Arbor, he reversed the usual sequence of passing from a local center to nation-wide and world-wide service. At twenty-two he had set out around the world. He had spent the years from twenty-eight to thirty-eight preaching the world-wide message of Christianity in every state in the Union. From thirty-eight to forty-eight, while serving as a bishop in far-off India, his duties had carried him into all the continents of the world except one. Now at forty-eight, as always disdaining precedent and tradition, he had settled down in a midwestern university town, and was happy.

When, years before, I had said, "I won't hold him back, I'll leap with him," we had no blueprint to suggest where the leaps might lead. We both loved Pilgrimthorpe and my first thought would have been Hingham and Boston. Fred was supremely oblivious to such considerations. "No house," he would say, "must ever be a deciding factor in our work." Had geography mattered, however, no more delightful spot could have been found than Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Fred's predecessor was the Rev. Arthur W. Stalker who had served the Methodist Church and the community for twenty-five years. He had postponed his own retirement for three years while the church searched for his successor. Dr. Stalker's personality was ideally suited to that many-sided university town. He was a liberal in religion, and had a broad intellectual outlook that never seemed to antagonize, even when he ran counter to prejudices. He had a ready wit and

the gift of turning an apt phrase. I remember his saying to Fred in reference to the temper of the congregation:

"We don't bother much about theology here, but we have a very high regard for Jesus Christ."

He possessed genuine warmth of temperament and took time for friendship. This radiance of personality had proven irresistible to the townspeople and to six generations of college students. A prominent merchant told me wistfully:

"Just to see him pass my door and smile changed the whole day for me."

We, too, fell in love with Dr. Stalker and joined in the general mourning when only two months after our arrival, he suddenly succumbed to cancer. It was no easy task to follow this beloved figure, but it was Dr. Stalker himself who had urged his committee to approach Bishop Fisher and when our decision was made, he had given us the warmest welcome of all.

Our Joint Family

Ours was an elastic house at Ann Arbor. We took one large enough to try the joint-family system, so successful in the orient, and four generations of us lived happily together; Father and Mother Fisher, my husband and I, my niece, Helen and her husband, Gordon Halstead, with their three-year-old boy, Scott, born in Lucknow, India, whence the family had recently come. Another baby was born in our house and christened Welthy. John and Minnie Kopsi, Americans with a Finnish background completed our household. Fred and I revelled in our big family. We had admired the joint-family system in India and China; now we had an opportunity to try it and we liked it.

"There is no such thing as middle age, old age, or youth," Gertrude Stein once told me. "We are all contemporaries. We all have to adjust or we're already dead."

We were surprised to discover that the University of Michigan was only nineteen years younger than the University of Calcutta. The contrasts between Ann Arbor and Calcutta often amused us.

"The telephone here, Han, is both the messenger and the chit," Fred commented the first time that we were invited by telephone to dine at a charming suburban home. In comparison with the old-fashioned formality of a written note, the phone call seems at first rather brusque. But it did not take long for the telephone to become second nature.

We learned that our host at that first dinner party made a hobby of blooded cows.

"I'd like to show you my three hundred forty thoroughbreds, Dr. Fisher," he had said that evening after dinner, "if you will promise not to put them in your sermons. I hear every one of those sermons, either in my pew or over the radio, so you can't escape me, and Ann Arbor has discovered that you put everybody you meet into your sermons as illustrations of something or other." So we went to the temple of the sacred cows!

"There's the thirty-thousand-dollar bull. See the line of his back!" one of the guests remarked as our host stroked the bull affectionately, and pointed to a list of his prizes captured in nation-wide exhibitions. With a chuckle, Fred added, "And they say India is the only place where the cow is worshipped!"

Our host looked puzzled for a minute and then joined in the laughter.

We shivered through our first Christmas, our blood thin after our winterless years in India. We discovered that the falling snow brought with it the quality of quiet which the sunset gives to India. After our guests had left us in the evening, we sometimes took our walking sticks and wandered through the snow-silent avenues lined by warm, lighted homes. We tried to find a time of day when we could continue



Spedding Studio

Some Guests at Our Ann Arbor House

Seated, left to right: Mrs. P. A. Wadia of Bombay, the late Dr. J. T. Sunderland, author of India in Bondage, Prof. P. A. Wadia, visiting lecturer on philosophy in the United States from Bombay University, and the author. Standing: students from India studying in the University of Michigan.

the walks we took at sunset across the fields in rural India, or late at night in the city. Sometimes on those hot Calcutta midnights, wandering across the *maidan* to "eat the air" (*howakana*) before crawling under our breathless mosquito nets, Fred would say:

"Tell me, Han, what would you give for a foaming ice cream soda?" There was much of the small boy in the august bishop. Now, as though to make up for lost time, Fred loved to visit the soda fountain at the corner drugstore with a Siamese or Arabian student and watch the ice cream sodas disappear.

Students from All the World

Any remaining space in our joint-family home was soon filled to overflowing with students and guests. We found ourselves in the midst of ten thousand students who lived within walking distance of the University. The international group was composed of four hundred representatives of thirty different countries. Most of them rang our doorbell. We had left the distant East only to find it again more intimately here in the Middle West. Before the leaping flames in our fireplace young India met young Brazil; boys and girls from Siam and South Africa met the youth of Russia and Ceylon; American Negroes met young Canadians and Arabians. It made me feel at home to find that the largest group were the one hundred and thirty Chinese and some of their smiling faces were always with us.

On Thursday afternoons an international group, always hungry, as young people are the world over, gathered with my husband around the fireside. There were no formalities. It was known that Dr. Fisher would be there and all were welcome. Sometimes, looking into those leaping flames with us, were young Parsees to whom the fire meant something more than warmth; or a Buddhist, who, whirled about by the

American maelstrom, was losing his habit of meditation. Was it worth reviving? he asked. And how and where and when in our mechanized world?

Here in this little group, the Hindu, the Roman Catholic, the Protestant, the Shintoist, the Muslim took stock of their new environment, rich in everything except food for their starved spirits. It was a rare privilege to Fred to be able to meet this need.

Moving in and out of the countries of the world on ships that plied the seven seas, Fred had gained a perspective of the United States as the greatest mission field in the world. He was convinced that our youth must be made to see world patterns, must grasp their own responsibilities as internationalists. Through the years Fred had felt an increasing urge to share with American youth the experiences and meditations which had led him to his convictions on the subject of international responsibilities.

"If we can adjust human relations among our own citizens, culled from all the races, cultures, and nations of the world, and maintain full liberty and justice for all of them," Fred used to say, "then we shall have a banner and a message that our youth can bear across the world with conviction." What conversations, what thoughts, what discussions echoed against the walls of our Ann Arbor house!

The students often took these discussions back to their classrooms. We heard fragments of my husband's Sunday morning sermons creeping into some professor's lecture.

"When I criticize religion as I do, always remember that I am not referring to Dr. Fisher's religion," was one quotation that came back to us. Fred had asked the Ann Arbor people to use plain Dr. and not the title Bishop, as the bishop of the area lived in Detroit, and Fred wanted to avoid confusion.

Town and Gown

Fred Fisher found the freedom he craved in the Ann Arbor pulpit. Both town and gown responded with such enthusiasm that the church had to install amplifiers in the downstairs vestry for overflow meetings.

"How they kept pouring in," I wrote in my diary, one February Sunday after Fred had been kept from his pulpit by three weeks of illness. "Students sat on the steps leading to the pulpit and to the choir. They packed three hundred into the vestry and turned five hundred away. The ushers said it looked like Easter."

Faculty as well as students gave Fred a flattering reception. The President of the University, Dr. Alexander Ruthven, was a member of his congregation. Professor Jack Brumm, wit of the faculty and versatile toastmaster, told this incident at a banquet. "A professor on our faculty who hadn't been to church in many years, heard so much about Fisher that he thought he'd better go. On leaving the church, he said, 'That man Fisher asks God for more things than most preachers ever knew God had.' "

One of the faculty told Professor Brumm that he always felt he had truly worshipped after attending one of Fred's services, that he liked the way my husband read the Scriptures, and that he liked his prayers. Jack Brumm replied, "Well, I feel as though I should apologize for eavesdropping when Dr. Fisher prays, he seems to be on such intimate terms with God."

Even the children responded to Fred's ministrations. One precocious boy, brought up under progressive education methods which permitted anything short of mayhem, came with his parents one Sunday morning. Fearing his sudden impulses, they impressed upon him the fact that this was

God's house and he must be silent and do what everyone else did. To their amazement, all went well. On the way home they asked him how he had liked the service.

"Well," said Junior, "God hollered just as loud as I thought he would, but he looked so young!"

Home after the Sunday morning services, Fred would take a shower and slip into fresh clothing. He loved color and would dress up for Sunday in one of the red velvet coats which I had especially made for him. Refreshed and beaming, he took his place at the head of our four-generation table which, on Sundays, was usually pulled out to the full extent of its leaves.

"By the way, Welthy," Fred would say, on the way home from church, "I invited the whole Manley family for dinner. They are driving over from Ohio." Then there would be a secretary whom he had forgotten to mention, and one or two foreign students who happened to drop in. The sermon always came in for critical analysis.

"You went a little too far, this morning, Fred," Father Fisher, a staunch Lutheran G.O.P. of seventy-eight years, would throw down the gauntlet.

"Not one inch too far," animated, seventy-six-year-old Mother Fisher would sputter. "I believe every word you said, Fred." She always did.

Up and Down the United States

The winter of 1931-32 found Fred enmeshed deep in the heart of America. He had been at home for over a year, and was increasingly preoccupied with the problems of his own country, though at his hands they usually expanded to become universal problems. He used less and less of his oriental experiences in his sermons, but in his week-day lectures he remained the interpreter of East to West.

The Ann Arbor church was most generous in granting

Fred the freedom to plan his time and furnished a sufficient staff so that he could continue his lectures at other universities and do some writing.

While in Ann Arbor he wrote a book of sermons, *Can I Know God?* and also the biography, *That Strange Little Brown Man, Gandhi*, which was later banned by the British Government.

The Church not only permitted Fred to make his own schedule of services for the students and townspeople of Ann Arbor, but also to address groups and universities outside the state of Michigan. However, Fred insisted on being in his own pulpit every Sunday except when his lectures took him as far away as California and Texas. Even so, he was careful not to be away more than one or two Sundays during the college year.

At the invitation of President Selecman of the Southern Methodist University he delivered the Fondren Lectures in Dallas, Texas, during the spring of 1931. He used the same title for these lectures that he had chosen nine years earlier for the "I Will Maintain" campaign—"The Living Christ in the Modern World." But he treated the subject quite differently.

He was convinced that the orient was already reaping a harvest of leaders and directed movements from the seed sown through many years by the faithful work of Christian missionaries. "To discover the cause of this dramatic upsurge and to reveal its chief personalities is the humble ambition of these discussions. The spirit of the Living Christ is taken frankly as the leaven at work." He named the first great reformer of India, Ram Mohan Roy, as the initiator of the oriental renaissance, and Tagore as the exponent of modern oriental idealism.

He told the story of Ram Mohan Roy who was a young man when he met William Carey, India's first Protestant

missionary. Roy was won over by Carey, and freely acknowledged his acceptance of the teachings of the New Testament. He wrote a book on *The Precepts of Jesus*, and became an avowed reformer, a leader in defying the Brahman rules against crossing the ocean and visiting other lands. India today looks up to him as her foremost pioneer. He instituted many of the important social reforms to which such groups as the Brahma Samaj and the Servants of India are still devoting their lives.

The following winter, in February, 1932, Fred delivered the E. T. Earl Lectures at the Pacific School of Religion at Berkeley, California. His subject was "Statesmen of the Living East." He had added to his list the name of Kemal Pasha who was using Christian principles in his reconstruction of the Near East. He also addressed a pastoral conference held in conjunction with the Earl Lectures, taking as his theme the challenging question, "What Is Wrong with Christian Missions?"

Indian Guests

The heavy schedule he had laid out left Fred with scant margins of free time. With his quick responsiveness he became increasingly involved in current interests of his own country. This did not mean, however, that India had lost its place in his affections. Our life in Ann Arbor and in the United States was lived always against a back-drop of consciousness of the orient, and especially of India.

We eagerly invited Indians visiting this country to spend as much time as they could spare with us. When Vallabhai Patel was our guest, Ann Arbor people saw for the first time an Indian dressed in complete modern Hindu costume. At a luncheon we gave for him in our home, Patel was dressed in spotless Indian white, his Gandhi cap on his head, his long Khaddar homespun buttoned up to the throat like an anglican

clerical coat. He symbolized the pride and dignity and self-respect of Indian nationalism.

Fred Fisher would as soon have dropped his subscription to the Methodist *Christian Advocate* as to the *Indian Social Reformer*, on whose front page for fifty-two years had appeared the flaming words of our own William Lloyd Garrison, the abolitionist:

"I will be as harsh as truth and as uncompromising as justice; I am in earnest; I will not equivocate—I will not excuse, I will not retreat a single inch, AND I WILL BE HEARD."

When Mr. K. Natarajan, editor of the *Reformer*, arrived in this country, Fred arranged to have him speak before the University of Michigan. Mr. Natarajan is one of those poised, distinguished Indian intellectuals, who blend wisdom with learning. His tolerance has tempered his passion for reform until he has become of the world's truly great. His daughter, Kama Khoti, came with him to Ann Arbor, where they were guests in our home. We took them to see the famous "three hundred and forty cows with college educations." They were both amused and impressed.

Kama Khoti was quite deaf, and when one of the faculty wives asked why, I explained that she had been sentenced to prison terms for her nationalist activities. Her hearing was impaired by the sunless cell. She is a Hindu and her warmest friend is a Muslim whom she met in that same damp prison. Indeed, her closest friends are her former prison-mates and they are the prominent women of present-day India.

We gave a dinner in the Natarajans' honor to some forty members of the university faculty and their wives. After dinner the Indian editor, in response to Fred's leading questions, dominated a conversation which ranged through religions, literature and comparative cultures. It was a rare evening.

"Why don't you ask him something?" I prodded some younger professors, who had been listening without saying a word.

"How can we?" they replied. "He knows our Bible, our Shakespeare and our classics better than we do, and has been quoting them. In addition he knows his own literature, sacred books and poets that we have never even heard of!"

Natarajan's mind had encompassed antipodal cultures and had blended them into a composite philosophy richer than either one.

After my husband's death, Mr. Natarajan wrote in the *Indian Social Reformer*:

"The most distinctive feature of Fisher's character was his unique capacity, while firmly holding to his own Christian beliefs, whole-heartedly to appreciate the value of other spiritual systems. In his home he welcomed men of all races and creeds and made them feel completely oblivious to the differences between them and himself. In this he was mightily helped by Mrs. Fisher who shared all her husband's enthusiasm for humanity. He was a vigorous and independent thinker."

There was very special pleasure and satisfaction for Fred in welcoming as our guest in our American home the Indian who had succeeded him as bishop. Bishop and Mrs. Chitambar came to the United States for the General Conference of 1932, and in October they visited us in Ann Arbor. Fred asked him to preach on Sunday, and introduced him to the congregations as "a friend whom I have known nearly thirty years, with whom I have disagreed, with whom I have debated—he always won in the debate—with whom I have walked over sandy soil, with whom I have toiled in silent night, with whom I have struggled to find financial relief for great institutions in India—a friend."

Across the Water

It was while we were at Ann Arbor that Gandhi attended the London Round Table Conference of 1931-1932. It was the first time he had left India since his return in 1914 from the long hard years in South Africa. Fred agreed with others who were in touch with the Indian political scene in not expecting too much from this conference. They felt, however, that it might be an opportune moment for acquainting thoughtful groups in this country with Gandhi's philosophy and his platform.

Gandhi and his cause had been woefully garbled for many Americans. India was far away and its leader lent himself to the cartoonists' pencil. Gandhi's friends in this country fell into heated discussion whether he should be invited to cross the Atlantic. John Haynes Holmes and Roger Baldwin considered it unwise—no special issue was at stake and the time was not ripe. On the other hand, Upton Close and Fred, after sending out feelers to statesmen and college presidents, found a good deal of interest and a desire to talk things over with Gandhi.

There was a very real danger of unfortunate publicity. The value of the visit could be destroyed by a wrong entrance, and this danger was increased by divided factions. Fred and I spent many hours discussing the matter, consulting with friends, writing letters, sending telegrams. We planned to turn our home over to Gandhi, putting it completely at his disposal so that he could see people when and as he wished, in privacy, in addition to his appearances at large public gatherings.

"Would Dr. Fisher talk to Gandhi over the telephone?" asked the representative of a syndicate of newspapers. He would. While Fred was lecturing at Hamline University in St. Paul, he called London.

"Hello, Bapu (little father)," said my husband . . . and they talked fast. One does not waste words on trans-Atlantic calls. Fred went directly to the point. Gandhi's voice came back as clear as crystal:

"I feel it is more important that I return to Bombay to gird India's loins for a new struggle for liberty." And he ended, "God has not cleared my way to go to America. I will go in God's appointed time. My inner voice tells me it has not yet arrived."

"A miracle!" exclaimed Gandhi as he hung up the receiver. When told that the conversation had cost \$120 he commented, "Well, the Bishop should not have dropped so much of his good money into the Atlantic ocean!" He did not know that it was not the Bishop's money.

A sequel to that telephone conversation appeared in "A Message from Gandhi," published in October, 1942, in the monthly bulletin of the India League of America. Gandhi wrote:

"In America I suffer from the well-known malady called hero worship. Good Dr. Holmes, until recently of the Unity Church of New York, without knowing me personally became my advertising agent. Some of the nice things he said about me I never knew myself. . . . So I receive often embarrassing letters from America expecting me to perform miracles. Dr. Holmes was followed later by Bishop Fisher who knew me personally in India. He very nearly dragged me to America but fate ordained otherwise and I could not visit your vast and great country with its wonderful people."

Fred's biography of Gandhi was published under a title which he neither suggested nor approved—*That Strange Little Brown Man, Gandhi*. The name was an inspiration of someone on the publishers' staff (Long and Smith) who was trying for popular appeal.

The postal authorities notified Fred that "The British

Government of Simla had on September 23, 1932, banned the book . . . from India." The notice was waiting for us on our return from a five-weeks trip to Europe on October 1, 1932. The notice continued, "No translation, reprint or substantial reproduction will be allowed in the country (India)."

The copy Fred had sent to Gandhi was held up at the prison gate, and Gandhi did not see it for months. Many other copies mailed to India at the time of publication in June were safely received before the ban was announced. The Nationalists liked the book and advertised it widely across the country.

The editor of *Zion's Herald* congratulated Dr. Fisher on having written a book "that the British Government regards as important enough to be dangerous." The *Nation* commented that in view of the ban, "one might expect the volume to be an indiscriminate and wholesale indictment of the British in India. This is far from true. Dr. Fisher is pro-Indian but not anti-British. He is an anti-imperialist."

It was interesting to note that the reviewers generally, in this country, were impressed by a variety of angles and paid little attention to the book's anti-imperialism. Harry Hansen in his First Reader in the *World Telegram*, for instance, was interested in Fred's intimate picture of Gandhi's wife, of whom little had been written previously, and he quoted Fred's tribute:

"And herein lies the majesty of this quiet Indian woman who through love alone bridged the chasm from riches to poverty, from comfort to prison and kept side by side with Gandhi from the days when he was a wealthy man and she the hostess in his home to yesterday when she begged the authorities with tears in her eyes to be allowed to go to jail instead of her husband."

Mr. Hansen was also impressed by Fred's presentation of the subject of sex in India, in contrast to the muck-raking ex-

ploitation of the subject by another American writer a few years earlier. Mr. Hansen commented: "Dr. Fisher has a chapter on sex in India which is the sanest thing I have read on the subject. Instead of playing up sex abuses as normal in India, he reminds us that all growing and changing civilizations have 'vestigial social customs' and that it is 'a literary crime to brilliantly and seductively describe these dying elements in such a manner as to betray the true national character.' "

Saint Paul Versus Byron

Throughout these crowded, swiftly moving days my husband kept up a quiet, heroic fight against his own physical handicaps. He would take a few days in the University Hospital, or we would drive to Mount Clemens for the baths, or he would stop at the Martinsville Sanitarium in his own state of Indiana for a brief respite, en route to Texas or Nebraska or Virginia.

He wrote me a significant letter from Martinsville in which, on the basis of his physician's last report, he analyzed the influence of his health on his career.

"These treatments," he wrote, "and the diagnosis show me that my spirit has often been broken and marred by a suffering body. Dr. Alexander has had over four thousand cases of arthritis in all its varieties and effects and it gives me pause as I learn of the possible mental and nervous results. I can see myself now as never before and am determined to act as Paul did to his thorn in the flesh instead of the way Byron did to his club foot.

"The doctor says to get away for treatment when we see this coming. The poison fills the system to overflowing before the swelling or actual localized pain comes—that is the climax of a driving thyroid gland. That gland makes big

successes, he says, money, power, place, but it is a monster when overfed. It drives blindly on. Genius is made by it, but its excess leads to bitter pain and defeat.

"He thinks that my ideals and my career in the ministry have saved me. My trouble is organic, that is, inherited, and had I chosen a worldly career, he says, even now a wheel chair or the grave would have me. He says I will never cure it, but can definitely control it."

Fred did control it, but he set himself an unmerciful schedule. He often rose at four in the morning for the quiet periods he so deeply craved, and his working day would continue until late at night. We read constantly together, and our book bill frequently exceeded our food bill for the month.

Summer Vacations

In view of Fred's physical condition, his summer vacations should have been times of complete relaxation. But the pressure of his eager interests never permitted him to take time off, except under pressure of acute pain. The church offered him a three-months vacation, but Fred usually chose to remain at his post until the summer session was over about the middle of August. The summer school of the University brought to Ann Arbor a mature group of three to five thousand students and faculty. Fred revelled in these summer audiences and for him, they crowned his year.

At the end of the summer school, Fred had five to six weeks left before the autumn session began, and we packed that interval full of work, play and study. Fred always began his vacations with a stack of detective stories avidly devoured the first week. These composed the ritual of transition. At the end of the week he was ready for farming or study, depending on the kind of vacation we planned. One summer it was on a secluded point of Martha's Vineyard, Cedar Tree

Neck. We lived near to nature in a shack Captain Daggett had built for fish nets, where the tides lapped our doorway and we were true amphibians.

Here, for four weeks between dips in the blue Atlantic, Fred was absorbed in one book, the Bible. He read it from Genesis through Revelation with the sole purpose of selecting sermon texts. He read Moffatt's translation which he also used for study and in his pulpit. He felt that this translation shocked us into an awareness of the Bible's present-day applications. Fred wrote out his texts with his big soft pencils and when he finished, he found to his amazement that he had copied 1,831 texts. Later, he had them typed and filed in a loose-leaf notebook. Below the last one I found this note in Fred's hand: "Completed September 11, 1931. A Glorious Task."

Fred planned his sermons in series, months in advance, sometimes at a sanitarium, on a train, or in the early morning hours at home. He would send back the text, the Scripture reading and the title of the sermon to his secretary who forwarded them to the organist and to the associate minister, who read the Scriptures and edited the bulletin. Fred never wrote his sermons out in full but his outlines were detailed and written in his big soft pencil so he could easily see them.

For reading he selected serious and important books; it was I who read the novels and current dramas and summarized them for him as we walked or drove in our work and play. In his early years, he copied by hand from books what he wanted to use. Later he devised a method of marking books in code: one character indicated suggestions for titles; another character, quotable passages for sermons and lectures. The secretary learned to transcribe as indicated in a series of notebooks—descendants of the notebooks Fred had kept all his life.

The Good Earth

When we spent a summer at Hingham, Fred turned farmer—and the transition was complete. "Where did you gain this impressive knowledge of farming?" I would ask him, for we were both city products. "On Uncle Henry's farm," he would reply and he would thereupon insist on my rereading *How to Get a Living from the Land*.

In the past when we had returned from India for a bishop's meeting or a General Conference, usually some time in March, one of our first trips in the new Ford was out to the country to buy two little pigs. Fred enjoyed them as other men like dogs, and their arrival at Pilgrimthorpe was exciting. We would bring home the baby chicks in the Ford with us. After that, Fred felt he had a farm. Father Fisher, who loved every living thing, took care of them as easily as he did the birds and squirrels who used to gather round him and eat out of his hand.

Trips to Europe

Two summer vacations we spent in Europe and we were in Germany the year Hitler was elected to power. We visited four German universities that summer, Halle, Frankfurt, Heidelberg and Berlin, and Fred had long talks on the political scene with members of their faculties. The Germans were still free to talk, but they were a frustrated people. The consensus, even then was: "Two roads lie before us, one toward Hitler and the other to Russia. Our students are preponderantly on the Hitler road; perhaps one tenth of them prefer the road to Russia." In mid-Atlantic, on our way home we heard the sinister news of Hitler's election.

We spent a week in the Bavarian village of Oberammergau during the summer of 1934. It was not the regular year,

but the Passion Play was produced in celebration of the 300th anniversary of its first performance by this village. We lived in the chalet of the member of the Lang family who took the part of the unrepentant thief and who had to hang on a cross for fifty long minutes. In everyday clothes this "thief" was a sturdy mountain guide, hard of muscle, and head of a wholesome family. A picture of the crucifixion was painted over his front door. The village traced their ancestors not as wood carvers, or weavers, but "my great grandmother on my father's side took the part of Mary" and "my great uncle on my mother's side was once the Christus."

It was a week of many exalted hours. Fred yielded his mind and heart completely to the power of the Play. The fact that Judas in his confession held the center of the stage for forty minutes impressed Fred as significant, and on his return he selected that scene to be enacted in the chancel of his own church.

The following summer of 1935 was the only year that we took separate vacations. Fred was going to what I teasingly called a stag party.

The trip was expensive and women were bluntly not welcome. "But I shall not stir a step unless you do something that you particularly want to do," insisted generous Fred. I decided upon a trip to Mexico and a six-weeks course in Spanish at the old university, followed by a flying trip to Yucatan.

Fred's engagement was with the Continuation Committee of the World Faith and Order Conference, of which he had been made a member in 1927. We came over to Switzerland from India for that first conference, and the Committee held meetings at intervals until the next conference in 1937.

Fred keenly enjoyed this group and never wanted to miss the discussions which centered upon a genuine church union

in the realm of "Faith and Order." Two successive summers, 1934 and 1935, Fred attended meetings of the smaller committee in Europe with some fifty other members, representing a dozen European countries and North America. I had sailed with him in 1934, but when he went on to Hertenstein, Switzerland, to talk world religion, I had gone to Geneva to review internationalism, and attend Prof. Zimmermann's lectures. I knew that women were not wanted at Hertenstein, but I confess I should have enjoyed eavesdropping.

The 1935 meeting was held at Hindsgaul, Denmark. It met in a small suburban hotel. A rare sense of fellowship pervaded the session, reminding Fred of his Indian week-end with Gandhi and Tagore. On both occasions the discussions cut across all racial and national lines. Fred accepted an appointment to the Executive Committee which was planning the program for the 1937 World Conference. He took the responsibility seriously for the cause of church union was supremely dear to him.

The Chairman of the Continuation Committee was Dr. William Temple, then Archbishop of York, and now of Canterbury, whom Fred admired and enjoyed. The give and take among this small group was stimulating. They realized that they were only a deliberative group, but they believed in constructive planning and in the power of prayer. Vital economic and industrial issues were left on the periphery while they delved deep into the center of Faith and Order.

Fred did not come directly home from the Continuation Committee meeting in 1935; but went round by Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. His letters from that part of Europe were both illuminating and amusing.

"Oh dear, what a lonesome I've got this quiet Finnish Sabbath," he wrote me from Helsinki. "Really, if anyone who's always sighing for the old-fashioned Sundays talks to me

again, I shall rise up and smite him. DEATH is stalking all the streets here today. No color, no joy, no pleasure such as you see in French families wandering up and down the Tuileries Gardens in Paris. It is reformation Lutheran to the core. I've been to church three times and feel sacrosanct. First to the great Cathedral (State church ritual and sermon in Finnish); second to the more colorful Russian Greek Church, with robes, ikons, candles and incense; third, at six P. M. to the dumpy little anglican chapel near the English embassy. I have sent forty postcards to friends in Central. . . ."

In the midst of discussions with the professors of Moscow University, Fred took the time to find me a present. And what a present! Most husbands would have brought home an ikon, a samovar, or a bit of Russian sable, but not Fred Fisher.

When the rascal was visiting the son of a Russian archbishop, he saw a curiously cut painting on wood. "That is Catherine, Madame La Ressource (Madame Quick-wit)," explained the Russian. "The painting marks the secret entrance to the apartment of her French lover, and it has been in our family for a hundred years!"

"How I should like to find something on that order to take to my wife!" exclaimed my irrepressible husband. The upshot of it was that under his own arm Fred lugged that heavy slab of painted wood across the Russian, Danish and German borders because the authorities would not pass anything that was crated. He had to unwrap and show it to a dozen inspectors and wrap it up again. I met him when the S.S. *Scanstates* landed in New York, and some twenty or more passengers were waiting around to see what kind of a looking minister's wife was to receive this unclerical present!

From Russia he wrote of his hours with Maxim Gorky and the Moscow literati.

"Gorky's divorced wife was acting as his hostess when I

was there at tea the other afternoon," he wrote. "This surprised some of his friends, but Gorky explained, 'She knows that I can't entertain a company like this without her presence, so she always comes.' And Gorky added wistfully as his ex-wife passed to greet a guest, 'I would rather see that woman's shadow than to see any other woman in the world.' " And "that's the way I need you, you know," Fred gallantly added.

At Gorky's home he met Romain Rolland, famous French literary light, who had also written a biography of Gandhi. Their conversation ranged from non-violence to illiteracy. Fred told of his discovery that the porters at the railroad stations would rather be tipped with the passenger's old newspapers and magazines than with money. The paper and printing shortage made it difficult to buy papers, and, emerging from centuries of illiteracy, they were literally avid for reading matter. Long cues of workers and peasants waiting at newsstands to buy papers were a commonplace in every city.

"I have definitely given up the Siberian trip," he wrote me later in the summer of 1935. "The combined Japanese and Russian restrictions in Siberia and Manchuria are such that I could not get independent views. All is guarded, watched, directed, and there is no guarantee even from the Japanese Ambassador at Moscow that I would not be stopped at the border." Already Pearl Harbor was foreshadowed, but we Americans were too naïve to realize the fact.

At the end of the summer Fred and I kept our rendezvous. I came north from Mexico, Fred south from Scandinavia and Russia to meet in New York City. Whether in India or the United States, Fred was maintaining his international interests, was living his life as a citizen of the world.

CHAPTER XVI

LAST CHAPTER

It was almost as if Fred realized that he had very little time left when we went to Central Church in Detroit in September, 1934. A sense of urgency was upon him at which I wondered at the time, but later, I thought I understood.

With his personal contacts all over the world, Fred had a more vivid sense than most Americans of the lateness of the hour, of the nearness of the world crisis. Fifteen years earlier in *India's Silent Revolution* he had begun warning us of the potential menace of Japan.

Shortly after his return from one of his European trips business took us to Cincinnati. As we drove across the long vistas of peaceful villages and farmlands, Fred startled me by crying out as though in pain, "You know, Han," he said, "I feel I must arouse them—even to stopping and ringing their doorbells to warn them. Their danger is so much closer than they realize."

During the four years at Ann Arbor, with frequent trips to Europe, Fred had also kept in close touch with conditions in the orient. In truth, the orient was unwilling to lose touch with him. Australia was pressing him to come to them for three months; Cairo University wanted him for a month's series of lectures; Bishop Lee had asked him to find time for the students of Manila and the Chinese group in Singapore. The demands upon his time would have filled a crowded year.

The opportunity to reach the ten thousand students of the University of Michigan had been the attraction which led

Fred to accept the Ann Arbor post. At the end of four years, he was challenged by the appeal of this larger audience. He gave a good deal of thought to the possibility of detaching himself from any definite post, making Hingham our headquarters, and creating for himself a roving commission as preacher at large to students all over the world.

He was impressed with the necessity of reaching this student group, who constitute the citizens of tomorrow, who will be called on so soon to take up the burdens which drop from the faltering hands of the elder generation, and carry on. Fred saw with terrifying clarity the inevitable crisis just ahead. He could not, of course, foresee details, but he sensed a world conflict into which the United States must inevitably be drawn.

While he was mulling over these considerations, trying to make up his mind as to the post where he could reach the largest audience and exert the most helpful influence, his dear friend, Bishop Edgar Blake, came to him to plead the cause of the Central Church of Detroit. This potentially important center in the fourth city in the United States had passed through a series of calamities and was dying on its feet. The Bishop pled the case eloquently, "It will take a giant to swing it," he said. "You are one of the two or three men in the United States who can do it." To the surprise not only of his friends throughout the Church, but also of his own family, Fred announced that he had accepted the pastorate of the Central Church of Detroit.

From Canada where he was lecturing, just after this decision, he wrote me a very personal letter. In it he expressed his own bafflement, his sense of stumbling now and then in his unrelenting effort to live up to the highest standards of his Christian ministry. He wrote:

"DEAREST HAN: I love you with a yearning unquenchable and not always expressible. Myself is inadequate for the

thoughts and dreams that grapple my being. That is why I stumble now and then. I gaze at the far-off and stumble over the near. And you, too, are like that really! Our souls belong together . . . the open road is our home. Tomorrow beckons and casts her shadow on today. What does she offer us? Glorious joy, softened with a little pain; love pricked with just enough thorns to require kisses of comfort and healing. And forsaking all others, I keep me only to thee, so long as we both shall live . . . and that means *always*.

Your own changing, leaping but enduring,

BOHN."

A Great Industrial City

It was a happy surprise to me to discover that Fred was captivated with Detroit. Nothing more different from his previous experience could be imagined. It offered a completely new environment.

"Detroit speaks a different language from any we have known . . . the language of tomorrow," he told me enthusiastically. "She is the most powerful industrial center in the world except Moscow. I tell you, Han, we have a big problem—how can we keep our scientific civilization from bursting? Crime and war may blast it. Either we've got to run the machines or the machines will run us. That old church tower in the heart of Detroit must keep its spire pointing Godward, and we must learn to speak Detroit's language."

He kept Friday evenings free to study Detroit as if it had been some foreign city. The principal of one of the city schools, a member of our church, was delighted to undertake to "educate the Fishers" and made all arrangements for our travelling seminar. Mr. Porter introduced us to the grandeur of old Detroit. We visited her schools, her chamber of commerce, her labor unions, her art gallery, her symphony, her amazing factories. One day when Henry Ford

was our host at Greenfield Village where he has his magnificent collection of Americana, he said to my husband, "I should like to meet your friend Gandhi. I think maybe you'd find we were more alike than we look!"

We discovered that one out of every ten citizens of this great city was a Negro and that it was the home of the Polish newspaper with the largest circulation in the world. Here was a parish, changing, varied, lovely, challenging!

Detroit's Central Church, the oldest Protestant society in the state of Michigan, fronted upon Grand Circus Park. The name sounds like a caricature, but the beautiful green park was laid out by L'Enfant at the same time that he created our national capital. Situated in the heart of this great industrial city, the park provided a perfect setting for the church, but the trouble was that most of the families had moved miles away, out into the suburbs.

"It would be easy to make this a preaching point and one with power," said Fred, "but that is not a church. People come from vast distances to Grand Circus Park every day, to department stores, theatres, clubs. They will come to church too if we give them something real, and if we include the young people and the children who constitute the heart of the church."

Long before anyone dreamed of gasoline shortages, Fred inaugurated a "Share Your Automobile" campaign. Fifty church members signed up to fill every seat in their cars with their neighbors for services and meetings and gradually the church became again the center of a parish, social life.

Of Such Is the Kingdom

Wednesday was family night at Central Church, and often eighty children sat down at their own long table for supper after choir rehearsal. Although Fred never had children of his own, he loved to be with them. When he discovered that Saturday afternoons were the favorite movie sessions for

boys and girls, he tried to hold the time free so that he could be with them and share their reactions. He would tell the older people at church suppers:

"Don't let the children annoy you with their shouts and their stamping feet. If you find that they trouble you, just remember that they are our children and that with them lies the future of our church. They can't do anything to bother me," he would chuckle, "I love their noise."

He placed Childhood, like a symbol of the future, at the heart of his church services. On Children's Day, the tiniest youngsters marched in, bearing a long daisy chain over their shoulders with which they draped the altar. By Palm Sunday of his first year in Detroit, the four gaunt, dour, black-gowned figures who had constituted the choir had been replaced by a hundred young choristers in white surplices over purple cassocks. They entered in a triumphant procession, palms in hand, led by white-robed trumpeters.

Fred felt that the Christian Church is the rightful heir of all church symbolism and that it was his privilege to select whatever seemed suited to Central's need. The result was hardly Methodist, as some conservatives pointed out, but neither was the crucifix which Fred had carried for many years in his pocket. He craved for his young people the best that the world had to offer—in beauty as well as in spiritual appeal.

When the choir boys' voices were changing they entered the crucifer's guild. They carried the processional cross, and the open Bible, and were trained to assist at the service of Holy Communion.

One of these young men told Fred, "You know, Dr. Fisher, I'm tempted to do a lot of things during the week, but, gee, I just can't do them—for I know that I have to carry that cross on Sunday!"

For his first associate, my husband decided upon Shurley Johnson, who had spent five years in India, three of them as pastor of Thoburn Church, Calcutta. Oscar and Adelia Starrett, who had worked both in Canton and Chengtu, China, were responsible for the church's Chinese work. For religious education, we selected Ruth Wilson, who had worked in South America. It has often been asked if, after his resignation from the bishopric, Fred still believed in missions. This should be an adequate answer. He certainly believed in missionaries!

Four Inches East

Soon after Fred's arrival in Detroit, the city which had been hesitating for years about widening its main traffic artery, Woodward Avenue, decided to act. In the process, Fred seized upon what he considered a heaven-sent opportunity to change Central Church from a mere auditorium into a sanctuary.

It was found that the church, a landmark since Civil War days, would have to be cut in two when the widening of the avenue was finally decided upon. Cutting off twenty-four feet of the church structure was not a very difficult engineering problem, though the whole city came down to see the great gap when the auditorium was sliced off.

"Did you hear about the great split in Central Church," became a current wisecrack.

The real difficulty had still to be met. The church tower, weighing four million pounds and reaching up to a height of one hundred and eighty-three feet, now stood twenty-four feet from its mother church. Would it be possible to move it?

This city of miracles and miracle men had no machine delicate enough to move the slender spire. It was a paradox. While they moved larger and heavier buildings as a matter

of routine, nothing as delicate as this tower had been attempted. Michigan insurance companies shook their heads but Lloyds of London, ever daring gamblers, agreed to insure the venture for fifty thousand dollars. After careful study it was decided that human hands turning jacks in perfect unison would be safer than any machine. A new cement foundation was made. As the old foundation was removed, seven huge jacks were pushed into place. Seven strong men capable of working harmoniously together were selected. Most of them were of Swedish ancestry and three of the seven were brothers.

At dawn, before the city stirred, the seven men would report at the church and practice to acquire the rhythm of turning their jacks in perfect unison. Engineers were nervous; city fathers were eager; church elders prayed. The tower took on a personality.

"Will they be able to move her? Will she crack? What do you think?"

All day, people watched from every hotel window. Reporters, dentists, patients, bootblacks, newsboys, clergy, salesmen, lawyers—all came to watch what might be a miracle or a catastrophe.

At long last the dawn broke that was to witness the first attempt. The head engineer had been too nervous to stay at home and had come down and slept in the park. The seven huskies arrived and manned the jacks. Their foreman blew his whistle, the seven men turned their jacks. The engineer was watching the doves in the steeple. If they flew away, it would mean that the spire had cracked. If they remained quiet, the experiment was a success. The doves did not stir. The tower had moved four inches east, the suspense was over. It could be done!

In three weeks the tower moved twenty-four feet east and six feet south, and rested on its new foundation. The engi-

neer and his seven men, working in perfect rhythm, had triumphed over a machine age—and ironically enough—in the city of Detroit itself. Doves still cooed in the steeple.

“What good is all the machinery in the world unless there are men behind it capable of working in harmony?” Fred asked. “Look at the League of Nations, or rather, don’t look at it!”

Newsweek of March 20, 1937, described the new Central Church: “Central’s 2000 members saw an amazing transformation when they attended the rededication service. In place of the drab expanse of organ pipes stood a liturgical sanctuary. In the center focal point for the eyes of the worshippers was an oak altar—with a cross, four candlesticks, a brass missal stand, and vases for flowers. On the altar lay a fair linen cloth embroidered with five crosses, symbolical of Jesus’ wounds.

“A carved reredos, with a deep red dossal cloth woven with red and gold thread, towers above the altar, oil paintings of the twelve Apostles decorate the wall of the sanctuary.

“On either side, there are carved oak stalls for the parish’s one hundred and fifty-six voices. To the left stands a pulpit with statues of the four Evangelists, carved by Alois Lang, a member of the Oberammergau Passion Play family.”

We had walked many a steamer deck discussing the subject of clerical dress for Fred. He decided to make a distinction between his everyday street suits and the clothes he wore to church to perform the sacred offices of the ministry. He had begun wearing a clerical collar and waistcoat in India. He came to feel the need of something more symbolic in the pulpit. A gesture of humility by a lover of Christ who called himself a Hindu helped him to reach his decision. Fred had invited Judge P. K. Sen of Patna to preach in the Thoburn pulpit at the Calcutta Central Conference of 1923. As

Judge Sen was about to mount the pulpit, he slipped off his sandals, and stood there humbly in his bare feet. Fred was impressed by this act of instinctive reverence.

"If a Hindu lover of Christ so respects our pulpit," he argued, "surely it would be appropriate for our clergy to clothe themselves in garments set apart for worship."

Fred was probably the first Methodist in India to wear an academic gown in the pulpit. At Ann Arbor, also, he had worn a Geneva gown. In Detroit, circumstances permitted him to build a worshipful church sanctuary, and to put his choir into vestments. He decided to complete the harmony of the picture by himself wearing a cassock, a surplice and a stole.

For years Fred had bewailed the lack of beauty and color in our mission churches all over the world. Now at last in Detroit he achieved one of his life dreams—a free pulpit, a beautiful sanctuary for worship, and a group of laymen imbued with his own conviction that the Church must enter into the everyday life of the man in the street.

A Home Chapel

In addition to an inspiring church, we had beauty and worship in our home. We took a house in the suburbs of the city, well away from the traffic and confusion of Grand Circus Park. My husband was attracted to it, because of a room, formerly a bar, which his quick imagination instantly transformed into a private chapel, another of his long cherished dreams.

Here again we brushed the backdrop of India! When Fred and I were touring in the mofussil, we were guests in a Brahman home. Nothing of western civilization had been permitted to cross this threshold. The mother of the household, rising at dawn, took her ceremonial bath, which is a religious baptism with each new day. The bath over, she

entered her sanctuary, lighted her incense, knelt and prayed. After prayers, she rouged the soles of her feet to symbolize the hope that, as she pattered barefoot about her homely duties, she might leave, wherever she passed, the imprint of that holy matin prayer.

At the time Fred had said, "To what corner of our home, Han, could we take a guest, as our Brahman hostess took us, and say 'Enter, if you will, into my room of worship?' " Now at last we too were to have our private sanctuary.

Before we signed the deed, Fred's imagination had already furnished the chapel, decorated the altar and painted the walls. I could see it perfectly and all I had to do was to execute the plans! Two young artists, the Skinner brothers, twins, spent their days in our home for two months painting the murals.

The altar symbolized Fred's belief in the truth in all religions. The dossal cloth came from the Muslims, the candlesticks from Hindu Benares, and the vases from a Confucian temple in Nanking. The brass tabernacle on the center of the altar was from Buddhist Tibet. Over all, magnetizing all, towered the Cross of Christ.

It is impossible to do justice to the variety of activities which Fred organized with the assistance of his staff, and the enthusiastic congregation that he had soon built up. I shall mention only a few of the projects.

A cherished tradition of the church had been a mission among the twelve hundred Chinese residents of the city. Of course this work especially appealed to me, and we were happy to continue it. We did not ask the Community Chest for a dollar. Central Church provided all the funds. The Rev. C. C. Hung and his wife, two devoted Chinese Christians, brought to the church house a group of young Chinese, born in this country, who were a happy blend of old China and young America.

A Timely Institute

The Detroit Institute was a challenging experiment. It was "A Symposium on Religion in Relation to Communism, Fascism, the Totalitarian State and Secular State Socialism," and was held in the Central Church.

It owed its origin to Fred's visit to Russia the preceding summer. He had returned convinced that our mechanistic way of life with all its lovely gadgets and mechanical robots is doomed unless it has God in it.

"I have experienced a veritable new-birth of religious faith and devotion," he told his parish on his first Sunday at home. "Russia has made me more religious than ever. Be-headed bishops, exiled priests, despoiled churches mark the very path of victorious materialism. This calls forth my passionate adherence to the suffering and crucified Christ. His cross becomes more precious, his message more sure. . . .

"Our only modern hope is to link the spiritual power of the Christ-like life to the economic and social needs of today."

And yet some people actually accused Fred of communism. In reporting the Institute on Religion the *Detroit Times* called him a "Red," apparently because he said with prophetic discernment, "The real fight in the world is against Fascism rather than Communism." Two days later the *Times* printed a public apology to Fred!

The Institute attracted attention all over the country because it included among its five hundred delegates and outstanding speakers, Jews, Catholics, and Protestants. Fred believed that "the crisis of this hour will have to have the united front of every faith that believes in God."

Commenting on this gathering, the *Boston Transcript* said:

"Of conferences on social justice there is no end. But the

Detroit Institute last week was something different. Here religion was the center and the supreme factor. The institute was neither political nor economic nor social. It was religious.

"Dr. Fisher sees that the central and all-determining factor of religion hardly gets a look-in on these world-quaking movements . . . Fascism, Atheistic Communism, Naziism, the Totalitarian State. He wanted to find men who would first of all back up his idea that religion is the first thing and the last thing, and that without it there is no real solution of any human problem, no progress nor peace."

Vital Personal Contacts

It was in his personal relationships with members of his congregation that Fred, like all ministers, gave of himself most intimately, and with results that can never be measured. The files of his correspondence dimly suggest the quality of wisdom and inspiration which he was privileged to convey. These relationships transcended all boundaries of orthodox doctrine. There was, for instance, the letter from a parishioner, accompanying the resignation of himself and his wife from the church. He wrote:

"Several months have passed since our decision to withdraw our membership from Central. I have decided to reunite with the Roman Catholic Church from which I have been separated for a dozen years and Mrs. — will unite for the first time.

"I wish to take this opportunity to express to you my gratitude for the gift of faith which I believe you were instrumental in giving me. That faith was at a very low ebb indeed when I first had the privilege of meeting you a year ago when you came to Detroit. I believe you will win many souls for Christ. Your field of work must not be limited to Central, nor to the Methodist Episcopal Church. To limit your field

thus is to strengthen the divisions of Christ's Church. I like to think of you as God's agent, working for the union of all denominations into one Church. As a Catholic, I shall remember your aims, and hope I can contribute my small share in your greater plan."

In reply, Fred wrote:

"While sincerely regretting that you and Mrs. —— have found it advisable to sever your official relationship with our church, I am nevertheless greatly blessed in the receipt of your letter. You have been able to discern my attitude of mind, and my belief in all the expressions of our Christian faith. I love all the churches, and believe that each has a special task and mission to perform. Therefore you will have my prayers and my love as you again relate yourself to the church of your childhood. Come to our services every now and then, enter into our fellowship, make yourself so personally known to me that I shall be able to hold you and Mrs. —— very definitely in my mind and heart. It is good to have had you, and I hope God's abundant blessing will continue to be upon you. With kind regards, always, sincerely yours . . ."

Another letter from a prominent business man of Detroit thanked Fred for an invitation to join the official board of the church, but declined on the ground that he feared he did not lead a sufficiently exemplary life to merit such an honor. Fred replied with genial good humor:

"My goodness! What terrible sins do you commit? The chances are that you are exactly the type of person we need for our official life at Central Church. We really need some humanizing, and maybe you can give it to us. Your letter is one of the most intriguing I have ever received, and I am asking Mr. Johnson to see you personally for a good chat. Then, in the early autumn, I hope for that privilege myself. With best wishes, very sincerely yours. . . ."

Church Unity in Detroit

The subject of church unity was, as always, close to Fred's heart and he participated in several practical efforts towards its realization.

Dean Kirk B. O'Farrell of St. Paul's Cathedral (Protestant Episcopal) and Fred were kindred spirits and these two arranged the first joint communion service of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Protestant Episcopal Church.

On a Maundy Thursday evening, my husband invited Dean O'Farrell to read the communion service in Central Church and administer Holy Communion to the joint congregations. The idea was vigorously protested by conservatives in both communions. The two clergymen warned their congregations to stay away from the service "if only curiosity prompts your participation."

"We are all a part of the Universal Church of Christ," said my husband. "Our Methodist Church sprang from the Anglican Church. John Wesley lived and died a priest in that church. Dean O'Farrell represents tonight what I believe may be our way of unity."

In reply the dean said:

"I feel that the Christian Churches, particularly these two sister churches, should unite on a deeper spiritual basis of love and unity. After all, we share the great fundamentals in faith. One can feel a growing impulse towards a great Christian unity." A thousand persons attended this union service and partook of Holy Communion.

Free Churchmen

It was again a striving towards Christian unity which led Fred to accept the presidency of the Free Church Fellowship for two years, 1935 to 1937. This was a fellowship composed chiefly of Unitarian and Universalist clergy with

a scattering of Congregationalists and other liberals too.

"Our Free Church Fellowship," Fred told them, "must become a dynamic, living, irrepressible organism—a spiritual human unity. It will fail if it seeks to develop an eclecticism or, in other words, a mere forced amalgam of inconsistent forms. It will never get on if it remains in a trance of mere tolerance. It must become a home for free spirits, a pattern for a free man's behavior. It must develop new codes of free conduct that will stand tottering men on their feet and that will bind decimated human groups into sympathetic unity."

Dr. Louis Cornish, President of the American Unitarian Association, was a close friend of my husband's and they had a cordial mutual understanding. Fred had for some years been seeking an American churchman who would undertake to visit the Philippines and extend the hand of fellowship to the clergy of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic and Independent Church of the Philippines. This church, although Roman in its ritual is Unitarian in theology. Fred urged Dr. Cornish to accept this mission, feeling that he could report to this country on a phase of Filipino religious life about which almost nothing was known.

Before Dr. Cornish made his pilgrimage, he had been elected president of the International Association for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom at the World Congress in Oxford, England, in 1937. Archbishop Aglipay of Manila at that time linked his Independent Church to this organization. When Dr. Cornish visited the Philippines in 1938-39, he came to them as president of an organization with which they were already allied. Dr. Cornish travelled over four thousand miles by boat, visiting the five thousand, five hundred churches of this Independent group. They met the bishops, clergy, laity and cross sections of Filipino life seldom seen by travellers. Dr. Cornish described this journey in his book, *The Philippines Calling*.

Somewhere along the way, Fred found time to help in the launching and to accept the presidency of Theta Phi, an honorary society for the clergy. The weekly *Time* commented:

"Of the societies which exist to bestow high accolade on United States scholars, most illustrious are Phi Beta Kappa . . . which enrolls honor students, Tau Beta Pi and Sigma Xi which respectively honor engineers and scientists. . . . Not until 1933 did anyone do anything about providing clergymen with a professional honor society. . . . Theta Phi was launched last week under the auspices of a highly respectable group of United States ministers. Taking 'Friends of God' for its motto . . ."

Fred's energy seemed inexhaustible during these final years. In addition to his work in Central Church, he maintained a heavy schedule of outside lectures. Instead of giving up his pastorate in order to be free to carry his message to the youth of the country, he contrived to do both jobs. He was Beamer lecturer at Depauw University; special lecturer at Boston University, Syracuse University, Duke University and Morningside College; Adams lecturer at Indiana University and Cole lecturer at Vanderbilt University.

In March, 1938, I drove with Fred to Southern College, Lakeland, Florida, where he was to give a week of sermons and lectures. We both fell in love with the beautiful campus. The orange trees, the mangoes, and the jasmine reminded us so much of India that Fred gave the college the Hindu temple which we had brought home from Benares. It was meant for our own Hingham garden where we had planned to settle down in our old age. The New England climate proved too severe for the red Indian sandstone, however, and our busy lives prevented us from settling down anywhere. As though Fred Fisher would ever have been able to retire!

On this trip to Florida we had an automobile accident which was to have tragic consequences. At the time we had no suspicion that Fred had sustained a serious injury to his heart.

How can you measure time? It seemed to me we spent a lifetime in our fourteen years together. We travelled four hundred thousand miles visiting every continent except South America. We moved about so rapidly, I often woke up not sure what country I was in until I heard the newsboy shouting outside our window. But our greatest journeys were those of the mind.

At home in Detroit, Fred continued his strenuous life, but he kept saying, "Han, I'm so tired." Probably I should have suspected what was happening but I didn't. I knew that he was working too hard. It was only later I remembered how often he spoke of our life together, wistfully, as if it were something of which we must keep firm hold. He would often repeat, "And forsaking all others, I keep me only to thee, so long as we both shall live . . . and that means always."

Learning to Live Forever

During these weeks he was preparing an Easter sermon on the subject, "Learning to Live Forever." He said to me, "I get awfully curious, Han, to know what life beyond is like." At the time I thought it was just because he was so buried in his Easter message, but it may have been the stirrings of premonition! That last Maundy Thursday morning when he went out the front door on his way to visit a parishioner in financial difficulties, he said, "Han darling, did I kiss you?"

"Yes, dear," I said, "but why not again?"

In his little Ford on his way downtown he felt an over-

whelming pain. Friends took him to an office where the nurse sent for a physician. Dr. Joseph Shaffer came immediately and accompanied him in the ambulance to the Henry Ford hospital.

I reached Fred as soon as I was notified. He described the pain that was never to loosen its hold until the end. It beat down upon him, he said, like bolts of lightning, crushing his heart under its concentrated pressure.

He was to have confirmed a class of children that Maundy Thursday evening and to have administered their first communion. After dozing under the opiate, he told me once that he had gone to the church in his dream and laid his hands upon their heads. Some of the children in this class were especially precious to him.

During the night he seemed to be resting under his oxygen tent. At 4:57, on Good Friday morning, the nurse called the doctor and me in haste, but before we could cross the corridor, Fred's spirit had gone.

Fred's sermon for Easter Sunday, "Learning to Live Forever," was already advertised in the city papers and in the church bulletin. He was never to preach the sermon, but for thousands of people that Easter Day carried a special message because of the circumstance of Fred's having left us on Good Friday. Easter Day was his coronation.

Flanked by guards of honor of the Knights Templars and his own young men of the Crucifers' Guild, Fred's body lay in state before the high altar of Central Church. During the afternoon hours, seven thousand people of every race and creed came to show their love for an interpreter of Christ who had transcended race and creed.

The Right Reverend Herman Page, D.D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal diocese of Michigan, read the Scriptures. Bishop Edgar Blake, the Reverend Shurley Johnson, Fred's beloved assistant, and Fred's friend, the Reverend

Edgar Dewitt Jones of the Central Woodward Christian Church of Detroit participated in the service.

Dr. Jones said:

"His was a global mind; he belonged not to a part of Christendom but to all of it. There was a touch of universality in everything he said. His vocabulary had no room for the narrow and intolerant term. He could not be fenced in, he disliked a wall. He was interested in old world religions and searched them for the good they might contain, and, finding that good, he baptized it in the 'Spirit of Christ.' "

Bishop Edgar Blake said, "Dr. Fisher had an ear for things others could not hear and an eye for things others could not see. He had a peculiar gift in that he was able to rightly interpret things in the light of the Eternal rather than the present or immediate future. He was completely at home with the Eternal."

Finally, everything was over and that inevitable hour came when I must return alone to the home that had been ours together. There came back to me as strangely appropriate, the words of the only poem I had ever written to Fred—only three months before. He had called me on the telephone one evening from a thousand miles away to say good night. And after he rang off, I wrote these lines:

Sometimes I feel we live together more
When we are far apart.
Our lives are strangely set within the public gaze.
Even our parting words—
Do you remember them?

So nonchalant we were—a mere good-bye.
Our friends were there, are always there,
It seems.

So sure are they that you are here to give,
To share your soul, your mind, your wisdom,

All with them,
That even they cannot believe that
We have words we two would say,
Just we alone.

But even now, I ask myself,
What are the words that you would say?
And I am dumb. There are no words,
Just understanding.
So here I sit alone,
And there you sit, so many miles away.
But even so,
Each book upon the many shelves speaks more than any
author dreams.
It speaks of you, your comment here,
Your humor there, your look beyond
What even Plato dreamed or Epictetus analyzed.

Sometimes I think we live together more
When we are far apart.

Some of Fred's ashes were placed in the Muncie church where he found God. Some I carried back to the high Himalayas in his beloved India. Some we placed near the altar in Central Church where he had confirmed so many young people and baptized so many babies. When I came to look for an inscription to put on the bronze plaque in the chancel, I found the words I wanted in a poem by his Indian friend, Rabindranath Tagore.

The plaque reads:

FREDERICK BOHN FISHER
Bishop Missionary Preacher
And when you had taken your leave,
I found God's footprints on my floor.

APPENDIX

MEDITATIONS

From Fred Fisher's Notebooks

The Buddhist

My English neighbors declare that the average Buddhist is a better man than the average Hindu. Whether this better state is altogether due to his religion is a matter for study. Buddhism has planted itself in the mountains towards Tibet, in Burma and in Japan, while Hinduism has absorbed India, original home of Buddhism.

The natural resources are better adapted to a prosperous life in the three main Buddhist centers than in Hindu India. For the most part India needs water. Japan and Burma abound in this luxury, and the hills have an ample supply. It is possible that Buddhism was more adaptable than Hinduism, so that the people developed the better religion, rather than the religion making the better people.

The ordinary Bengali has a higher standard of living than the ordinary Hindu from arid India. In addition to abundant water supply, other contributory causes are doubtless the early settlement of Bengal by occidental traders, teachers and missionaries and Calcutta's long reign as the English capital of India.

The problem suggests parallel questions. For instance, did Christianity produce the higher efficiency of the west, or did the occidental man and mind develop the kind of Christianity we have?

Of course my neighbors who judge between the Buddhist and the Hindu are occidentals and Christians by inheritance. They hail from temperate climates. How much is their opinion influenced by the similarity of the hill climate to their own? The hill people wear shoes, hats and clothing which cover the whole body. They spare us the shock of the easy-going, half-nakedness of the hot, plain folk. Perhaps it is not superiority but just plain climate that makes the difference in clothes. Heat strips off clothes, cold piles them on.

It is an easy transition to snap judgments on the degrading state of Hindu religious practices. And I, with no desire for argument remember Milan and Jerusalem.

Darjeeling, India,
March 2, 1921.

The Heavens Are Speaking

In the vernacular of the Himalayan folk, the rolling tone which answers the lightning's signal is called the voice of the sky. On hearing the reverberations, my bronzed companion looks up and says, "Sahib, the heavens are speaking."

Today, I was caught in a majestic storm. The flashing blades of lightning swung back and forth in devastating havoc above our heads. Limbs from giant trees fell smoking to the ground. Two defiant, growling pines were beheaded and rolled crashing down the gully. For a moment, I shrank. Naspoti, my mountain guide laid his brawny hand upon my knee, saying, "Listen, Sahib." With the wonder of a child I waited. Across the vast, unconquered valley came the rolling voice of Heaven.

"Do not these voices speak deep peace? Do you know what they say? Listen, Sahib. They say that God is near, that from these heights he needs must send the mighty streams that bathe the plains and make them grow. They tell the story of a watching God that needs must slay these stalwart trees to make a path for descending floods. The crashing and cracking is the laughter of these stricken spirits whom God hath chosen to die.

"For a generation they have lifted their spreading arms in adoration and petition, have thrust their myriad feet into the toughening hills. God bids them stand and hold the rocks between their toes. This is the reservoir to store the water of the plains between the storms.

"What think you, is it easier to grip the slopes or yield the life in outlet for the flow? Oh, Sahib, hear the heavens speak. They bear a parable to our two hearts. They bid us hold the heights, nor fear. Their God is ours. This two-fold purpose fills the universe of life. While God directs, we bear the burdens of the strong. When he wills, we yield before the storm."

Darjeeling, 1921.

Trust

Thanks! Swaying, singing mountain bird. How intrepid thou art, trusting thy weight to that tender twig. The tree that shelters thee leans far out over the cliff. A thousand feet of cañon yawn beneath thee, but thou art unafraid. And the morning sun sets thee to singing.

Teach me thy song. Give me thy trust.

Let me swing out my life over human depths, trust my weight to nature's laws, and, never fearing, sing the morning song of my true instincts. Custom and convention have hedged me in; tradition has restrained me; people's beliefs have stifled me. Oh, set me free to trust, and sway and sing!

The Glow Worm

What makes you shine so lovely bright,
My little glow worm in the night?
Nestled by the upturned clod,
Are you reflected light of God?

Oneness

We are not two—my Lord and I,
We are but one.
I am an off-spring of the sky,
Child of the sun,
For native home my soul aspires.

Youth or Age

What Master can I say is mine,
Whose slave am I?
Is this voice but an echo of yesterday,
Or an oracle of things yet to be?
Does iron that old men forged
Hang like heavy manacles on my arms and legs,
Or do the wings of youth cling with prophecy to my limbs?
Am I stiff necked and blind by staring backward,
Or does the dawn of a new age flood my sight with color?
Am I a ship bound in port,
Or a moving vessel over vast seas?

Is time my symbol of decay,
 Or a measure of growth and glory?
 When these poignant queries are answered
 I shall know who and what I am.

Detroit, September 11, 1937.

Caprice

Something in my heart longs for peace
 When war is in the air;
 And something yearns for war
 When peace is there.

Detroit, 1937.

On the Bay of Bengal

How love I the sea
 The strong wind in my face
 The taste of salt spray on my lips
 The full blown sail
 The fighting waves
 And churning foam
 The mist from storm clouds
 And the rolling, pitching boat.
 O, may I never grow so limp
 Of mind and heart
 As to lose the ever growing wonder
 And the sense of miracle
 When I behold the sea.

Roving

I am a humming bird
 That sips on the wing;
 Or am I a lark
 That flies as I sing?
 'Tis certain that resting is foreign to me
 To settle is slavehood; my soul must be free.
 I journey abroad, at home anywhere,
 I sail on the oceans, and fly in the air.
 No land I possess; nor interest pay,

For all that I need is absorbed on the way.
The Gods of all lands my divinities fair,
Pour on me their blessings and riches rare
I live on the road, and sleep in a tent
And never a moment in sorrow have spent.
Goodbye, today's friend, we met and we part,
But the seed of your fragrance will grow in my heart.

B. and I. steamer, 1935.

EXCERPTS FROM THE EPISCOPAL ADDRESS

To the Central Conference, Baroda, India, January, 1928

Prepared by Bishop Frederick B. Fisher

Character Not Masses

The Mass Movement, glorious as it is, has placed upon our shoulders an unprecedented responsibility and burden. Christian character is our goal, and character is not created in the mass.

Non-Christian Coöperation

Within the great non-Christian groups there are movements and personalities that share our dreams for a regenerated India. This is the time for unprecedented coöperation. He that is not against us, is for us.

A Religion of Social Service

Christ was the first great religious Teacher who deliberately emphasized social service as a religious practice. It would also seem that he was determined to draw attention away from God and toward men. He was distressed over the rites and ceremonies of the priests. The poor served the priest, not the priest the poor. He demanded that the priest should see the poverty, the disease, and the need of the common man. In this sense Christianity is the first and the greatest of the world's religions to emphasize the economic and social implications of true religion.

An Indigenous Church

Perhaps the time has come for the missionary to forego voluntarily his equality of rights and privileges in the Annual Conference in order that the Indian ministry may accept the entire responsibility for the legislative and spiritual management of his church.

Church Union

The Church of the Future will be openly sympathetic with all movements that tend to remove denominational barriers, and to bring about effective unity of Christianity in India,—a unity which will not reflect any particular historic form or order, but which will reflect the spirit of Jesus Christ in an organism which is the outgrowth of Indian experience and of Indian culture.

NOTES

From Fred Fisher's Notebooks

On Religion—

We have not lost sight of heaven, but our horizons have widened to take it in.

Christianity dare not withdraw from the economic order.

Secular society cares little whether you withdraw from it; it sits up straight when you seek to change it.

We live by our admirations. When we are cynical we are old, no matter what our age.

Truth is not necessarily embodied in religious forms. It is, however, always discovered by, revealed to, and incarnated in creative personalities.

Is one religion as good as another? No. There is one best religion: the one that bursts forth into fruitful deed of love and fellowship—that binds up wounds instead of inflicting them.

On Missions

Let us admit that missions never lived up to their full idealism. Very well; every brown and black and yellow man knows that it was not just the white conquistadors who represented our religion and race, but that among the incoming masters there were Christians who came to teach and to make friends. Missionary scholars came to learn from them as well as to bring learning to them.

On Internationalism

We are superseding ethnic religions and ethnic customs. The universal is displacing them. Mankind is becoming one new city.

The social engineer will be supreme in the next generation.

The Christian missionaries established the first modern schools and colleges (in India) and brought them to such a degree of efficiency as to lead the government to assure responsibility for them.

We could scarcely trust a Christianity purposely broken up into independent groups along national lines.

The only way to serve is to realize that black is a lovely color, that brown adorns the personality, that yellow adds charm to the picture, and that white is just one of God's hues.

World Culture Supplants Sectional Cultures

We are today in only the first phase of the new world culture. Previously we have known only sectional cultures, as for instance, the Hindu. Millions of people found their codes of conduct in Hindu forms. Suddenly, this sectional culture was overwhelmed by occidental, imperial impact. It was broken, shattered. Millions of Hindu fathers and mothers became panic-stricken about their children and their security for the future.

This same breakdown of limited sectional cultures has overwhelmed the Buddhist world, the Mahomedan world, the European Christian world and the American Puritan world. The world never had a really universal culture. The poise and character of each national, religious or cultural group was a product of mutually exclusive codes of conduct.

The vital test of liberal religion is its ability to influence the formation of this world culture. We need universal codes of conduct, applicable in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. If liberal religion cannot unify these confused segments, we are bound to revert to sectionalism through dictatorships and imposed authority.

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